



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

PL RESEARCH LIBRARIES



33 07485507 7

NCW
GALT

1

2

V.2.
NCW
Galt





SOUTHENNAN.

By JOHN GALT, Esq.,

AUTHOR OF

"LAWRIE TODD," "THE ANNALS OF THE PARISH," &c.

When royal Mary, blithe of mood,
Kept holyday in Holyrood.

Hogg.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

NEW-YORK :

PRINTED BY J. & J. HARPER, 82 CLIFF-STREET.

SOLD BY COLLINS AND HANNAY, COLLINS AND CO., G. AND C. AND H. CARVILL, O. A. ROORBACH, WHITE, GALLAHER, AND WHITE, A. T. GOODRICH, W. B. GILLEY, E. BLISS, C. S. FRANCIS, G. C. MORGAN, M. BANCROFT, W. BURGESS, N. B. HOLMES, M'ELRATH AND BANGS, E. B. CLAYTON, AND J. E. BETTS;—ALBANY, O. STEELE, AND LITTLE AND CUMMINGS.

1830.

W. S. M. V.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

94401B

ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

B 1940 L

SOUTHENNAN.

CHAPTER I.

———"We are prepared,
And easily entreated; 'tis good manners
Not to be troublesome!"

FORD.

SOUTHENNAN did not find it necessary to proceed so far as the Tolbooth, for he met Cornylees coming from the Council-chamber where he had been before the magistrates, by whom, after his case had been examined, he was discharged.

"In course now, Southennan," said the exasperated Laird, "this is an awful business; but it's weel o'er, and I must thole the dule o't as weel as I can. Oh, Laird! it's a most horridable thing, in course now, to be kept in the black-hole o' a Tolbooth, frae the yesterday till the morn."

Southennan expressed great pleasure at seeing the Laird again at liberty; and it being now nearly dinner time, he returned with him towards the Unicorn.

"I think, Cornylees," said he, "it was not becoming your wonted sagacity to be taken in by Auchenbrae?"

"Ye may weel say, taken in; for I had nae business, in course now, wi' him. How I was put into his hole, and how he got out, is past the comprehensions of human nature. It might, in a sense, hae come of Balwham's auld sherries. Hech! but it's stout and gude. I wouldna' mind to hae a crack wi' you, anent my disasters, in course now, o'er a flask o't."

In this sort of clishmaclavering they approached the door of the tavern, at which Hughoc was waiting for his master.

For some reason or another the boy, on this occasion, did not seem in any particular manner to wish for a private interview; but before Southennan appeared in sight, he had been remarkably sharp on the outlook for him, running con-

tinually into the street, and holding his hand over his eyes to see if he were coming, either from his own lodgings in the upper part of the town, or from Holyrood House below : indeed, his anxiety and impatience were so remarkable, that his conduct attracted the notice of some of the other guests.

As his master passed into the door, Hughoc slyly pulled him by the skirt, and with a significant cautious look, intimated that he had something particular to communicate : our hero, in consequence, allowed Cornylecs to go up stairs alone, and lingered in the passage to hear what the boy had to say. Hughoc, however, thought the place too public ; he looked suspiciously around, and then said—

“ Come into Maister Balwham’s ain room, and I ’ll brush the stour aff you, Laird ! ”

All this mystery had the intended effect on Southennan : he followed Hughoc into the room, and closed the door behind him, saying—

“ Well, what have you got to tell me now ; be quick, for dinner will soon be on the table.”

“ Ye maun first,” replied the boy, “ say, as sure’s death, that ye’ll no speak o’t ! for the man that told me said it was a something that might bring life and limb into jeopardy.” And he added, with a soft and low solemn whisper, “ They say it’s a treason ! ”

“ Let me hear what it is.”

“ The Queen’s in a terrible passion ; running up and down the palace, whisking in at ae door, and vanishing out at anither, like a cat wi’ a gale o’ wind in her tail.”

“ And for what is all this ? ”

“ A French gentleman has daur’t to court her, which is a sin, they say, that canna’ be pardoned, and which I am weel pleased to hear ; for when I saw her royal Majesty gallanting wi’ her leddies, I thought she was just like anither lass, though a very bonnie ane.”

Southennan was amused at this description, and inquired what he imagined the Queen to have been.

“ Na,” said Hughoc ; “ that’s a kittle question. But I thought she was a’ gold and pearls, wi’ a crown on her head, and bairns holding up her tail. Gudeness me ! what’s the worth o’ kings and queens, if they’re only just like other folk ? ”

“ Well, but what is this story of the Frenchman ? ”

“ The rights o’t cows a’ : he fell down, as the clash gangs, on his bended knees, and began to say a pater-noster, when the Count came in and catched him, and hauled him out o’ the room by the lug and the horn, and flung him down the stair,

wi' a kick that made him tumble the wull-cat three times before he reached the bottom."

"And what then?"

"He's ordered to pack up his ends and his awls, and be awa' to France."

Notwithstanding the extravagance of this story, Southennan discovered something in it which he was not ill-pleased to hear. It was manifest that Chatelard had committed some indiscretion, and that the Count Dufroy had dismissed him from the Queen's service. In fact, the boy's tale was but the vulgar version of the circumstances which have been already related, with the addition, however, of Chatelard's dismissal. Hughoc was enjoined to observe secrecy; and our hero went up stairs into the room where the daily guests were assembling. Here the particulars of different editions of the same story were under the process of collation and dissection; but all agreed that Chatelard had been dismissed, and that sentence of banishment was issued against him.

Cornylees, who had listened attentively to the discussion, and still resentful of the incarceration he had suffered, placed himself at table beside our hero, with a troubled and gloomy countenance. During the whole operations of the dinner he continued moody and sullen; at last he said—

"When will ye be gaun west, in course now, Southennan? I'll be aff the morn; an honest man has nae security in Embro. There was I, for naething waur than a drap of drink, confined, the best part of twa days and a whole blessed night, in the dismallest room, and the cauldest, in course now, I believe in this world! Jonah, in the whale's belly, without fire or candle, and naething a' the time but cauld fish guts to handle, wasna waur aff. And here's a young man, who just, I 'se warrant, for calling the Queen, in course now, a bonnie birdie, has lost his bread. I'm thinking courts and capitals are no canny places, and my back shall be, in course now, soon fronting them baith. But, Southennan, as ye're thinking, I see, of staying a while, in course now, ye'll be needing new claes, and ye ken the suit I got for the Reception was of the best o' Genoesy. I'll let you hae a bargain of them; and in the hope that we may make it gude, what say ye to a flask o' Balwham's auld sherries?"

A flask was accordingly ordered, but our hero declined the Laird's court dress, and advised him to carry it with him to the west country, where it might be shown as an honesty, to the latest posterity.

"Weel, I dinna think that advice, Southennan, ill' waur't on me, in course now; for I had a thought o' the same sort mysel: but in the way o' a politic frugality, I thought that if I kept the breeks for a memento mori, or as I may say, a memento Mary, cause they were torn in course now, when I fell by my misfortune in the Royal presence, that it would be sufficient." And giving Southennan a knudge with his elbow, and chuckling as he did so, he added, "Many a gude laugh will my posteriors hae, when they see the rents as testimonials of my exploits at the bonnie widow's court!"

At this juncture, Balwham wiping the flask with his apron, placed it open on the table.

"There," said he, "with triumph, 'is a better cordial than any in a' the Queen's aught. I had it out o' the cellar, ready for my worthy friend, Knockwhinnie. Ave Maria! he's now a free man; and I had a hope he would hae honoured my table by taking a trencher here, as he was wont to do in the Queen mother's time. But, heh sirs! he's an altered and penitential man! Oh, Cornylees! little ken ye o' what I'm subjected to on account o' your spree in his behalf. It was weel intended, but the best o' folk, as weel as you, Laird, are liable to mak' a mistake at a time."

Southennan, who stood, as Cornylees said of him, "more on his peremptors than was comely in the stock of an ancient house, or becoming the gude auld fashions o' Scotland," did not entirely relish the freedom of his host; and accordingly he civilly gave him a hint to retire.—"Well, Southennan, that beats prent, to tell an honest man in his ain house that we couldna' be fashed wi' him! In course now, I wouldna' hae been guilty o' sic menseless breeding for the price of my velvet dress, the whilk ye havena', in course now, yet said ye would buy."

Much as, at all times, our hero was amused with the home-spun eccentricities of Cornylees, the story of Hughoc had left an impression which he could not shake off; and in consequence he had but taken two glasses of the wine, when, on pretence of business, he left the Laird to solace his solitude with the remainder.

CHAPTER II.

“ ————— This is some fellow
 Who, having been prais'd for bluntness, doth affect
 A saucy roughness ; and constrains the garb
 Quite from his nature.”

SHAKSPEARE.

THE reader has already been informed that the Earl of Morton was, at this period, a distinguished member of the Scottish Court. This nobleman acted an eminent part in the subsequent troubles of Mary's reign, and was raised in the end to the dignity of Regent of the Kingdom.

He was esteemed by all parties as a man of talent : he professed to be a Protestant, and had great influence with that party ; but his conduct was loose and licentious, compared to the strict morality of the other lords of the congregation ; and it was not imputed to him that any principle, either of religion or of probity, stood in the way of his interest or advancement.

In his manners, Morton was coarse and familiar ; and possessed a downright blunt humour, which persons of that sort of character often assume and practise, as an evidence of what is called plain honesty, but which would better deserve the name of rough roguery. His person was not unlike his mind : he was rather under the common size ; his limbs and figure indicated weight rather than strength ; he was massy rather than athletic, dark in his complexion, his head round and bald ; and his features, harsh and without harmony, were expressive of shrewdness, fearlessness, and more of irascible obstinacy than of fortitude. Being addicted to court popularity among the lower orders, his language was in consequence colloquial, often vulgar : but his humour served to redeem the vulgarity, and the strong grasp of seeming sense which he took in his remarks, sometimes procured more deference to his opinions than the degree of their wisdom deserved : **in his wisdom**, indeed, there was much of cunning, and he was better pleased to accomplish his purposes by craftiness, than by that plain straightforward course, which he so much affected.

When Knockwhinnie, after changing his dress, proceeded to Holyrood House, to see his daughter, he fell in with the Earl

of Morton, with whom he had been, in his youth, acquainted. Time had, however, so altered himself in the interval, that the Earl did not recognise him at first, when he addressed himself to him, so that Knockwhinnie was obliged to mention his name, and to remind him of their former companionship.

"Ay!" said his Lordship, with one of his gruff smiles, "and so ye're that outlawed ne'er-do-well: but I hear ye hae gotten your pardon. I wonder what ye'll make o't, for when I was acquaint wi' you lang syne, ye were as camstairie a swankie as any royster in Lithgow or Falkland, and I maun say ye're no blate to be shoving your snout so soon in amang us here. What's your business at the Palace?"

Knockwhinnie recollected enough of Morton's character to take this address as it was really meant, and with equal jocularly answered it, saying,

"My daughter is there with the Queen, and I have not seen her since she was an infant."

"A brave father ye hae been to her!" said Morton; "and what's her name, and what's she like?"

Knockwhinnie briefly recapitulated the circumstances of her adoption by the Count Dufroy, to which Morton listened with curiosity and attention, without interposing a word during the recital, but at the conclusion he said,

"And so that jimp and genty lily-faced lassie, the Queen's mamselle, as they call her, is your only daughter. She'll be weel tochered; but I doubt the straemash that has happened this morning will be a bar to her matrimony."

"To what do you allude?"

"Hae ye no heard that the Frenchman wi' the parrot's neb, that every body said was to marry the Count's daughter, is thought to hae been o'er girt wi' the Queen, and used his efficacy to get your pardon for glaumor to hide their gallanting."

Knockwhinnie was disturbed by this information. It augured, he considered, but ill for himself that Chatelard should have incurred the envy and malice of the courtiers for procuring his pardon, nor was he less troubled to hear such a cause assigned for his success, as that which the Earl so irreverently expressed.

By this time they had come near to the palace-gate, and were about to enter, when Morton seeing Chatelard and Rizzio at a distance, seemingly in earnest and serious conversation, pointed him out to Knockwhinnie.

"D'ye see," said he, "yon twa lads at the park-yett; ane of them is a perfect deevil incarnate. I mean him wi' the bowly

legs, sae stout and short. I redd you, Knockwhinnie, take care of your lugs and the eyne in your head, to say naething of either your teeth or your tongue, for he has the black art of getting the better of every body. The other lad wi' the lang genteel legs, and sae spruce, is the Frenchman that got you respited frae the gallows ; for its but a respite, Knockwhinnie, as nae doubt ye ken in your own breast what ye're ordained for."

Knockwhinnie rather abruptly quitted the Earl, and went towards Rizzio and Chatelard. On approaching them, he addressed himself at once to the Frenchman, with his best courtesy, and thanked him with sincerity for the service he had done him ; saying,

"I am Knockwhinnie, and I hope it is not true that you have been exposed to any ill-will on my account."

While he was speaking, Rizzio observed him closely, perusing him as it were from head to foot, an instinctive habit whenever a stranger came before him. Chatelard, on the contrary, appeared confused, his eye wandered, and every thing about him evinced a wish that he were elsewhere. The warmth, however, and frankness of Knockwhinnie put this out of his power ; they were too sincere and decided to be evaded, he could not, therefore, but acknowledge that he was happy in having been able to render any service to the father of Adelaide.

"It is true," said he, "that I have fallen since into some eclipse, but I accuse only Dufroy."

"What say you ?" cried Knockwhinnie. "In what has he injured you ? Is it on my account ? Has he not already punished me enough ?"

Rizzio, by a slight emotion of surprise, showed that he felt some interest in the father of Adelaide, whom he now saw for the first time. But he made no remark : Chatelard, however, replied,

"The Count is jealous of every one that has any influence with the Queen ; and it is known that he was averse to your pardon. I succeeded in my application to her Majesty ; and in that I have offended. He thinks, by having procured my dismissal, he has indemnified himself, and punished me ; but I am not yet out of Scotland."

There was, in these few words, more of the spirit of a young man than the worldliness of a courtier. They implied confidence in the Queen's supposed partiality for him, more openly than was discreet towards a stranger. Rizzio seemed to feel this, and by a sign intimated to Chatelard to be more on his

guard ; but the pride and ambition of the Frenchman were both smarting with the pain of his dismissal ; at the time he was little disposed to repress the animosity which he felt against Dufroy, and accordingly he continued to inveigh against him, with the acrimony of mortified feelings and disappointed ambition.

"His enmity," said Knockwhinnie, "can only serve to augment my obligations to you ; it indeed increases your claim upon me : and as he adopted my daughter without my consent, I am now, thanks to you and the Queen's grace, in a condition to assert the rights and prerogatives of her natural parent."

Rizzio, who had not before interposed, observed,

"But Chatelard is compelled to quit the kingdom, and is ordered to embark to-morrow in a vessel which sails in the course of the day for Calais."

"It must not be—it must not be!" rejoined Knockwhinnie, hastily ; "he has obtained the remission of my offence, and it is my duty to mitigate his misfortune. In what odour stands Lord Morton with the Queen ? he was once a friend of mine, and I parted from him just now seemingly content to renew our intimacy. Think you that it will serve my friend here to ask his interference?"

"You are, no doubt, aware," replied Rizzio, "that he is with the reformers ; but he hath power through the Queen's bastard brother, the Prior of St. Andrew's, and no man of the Court, not even the Count Dufroy, has, at this time, so much influence with her Majesty."

"Has the Prior, too, fallen from the church?" inquired Knockwhinnie, who was himself a Catholic, but a very moderate one.

"That is an old story," said Rizzio, "and it is supposed he will soon cast his slough : he is expected to be ennobled."

A slight shade of sadness passed over the countenance of Knockwhinnie, and he said, in a softened tone,

"I expect to find many old friends with new faces."

"If you find any friends at all," said Chatelard, "account yourself fortunate ; for the Count Dufroy rules all."

"I grieve to hear it ; our Scottish barons are not of a temper to brook the interference of foreigners in their concerns."

Rizzio changed colour at this, and said, "The man must be careless of his hands, who would attempt to use any freedom with your thistles."

"And yet," replied Chatelard, somewhat jeeringly, "I know of no one so apt as yourself to do so."

"What?" cried Rizzio, with a sharp accent.

"I have heard," replied the Frenchman, "that you are to be my successor."

Rizzio, whose situation in the office of the Queen's correspondence was under Chatelard, affected to laugh at this, and looked at Knockwhinnie, who replied,

"In sooth, gentlemen, you must set a watch on your lips, if you hope for easy days and sound rest among us; for we do not account the state to have much prospered since it became needful to trust so much of our business to you learned foreigners. But I shall have other opportunities of counselling you on this head; and I pray you," he added, addressing Chatelard, "to meet me in the evening in the Unicorn, for I have not at present time to speak more of my mind to you."

CHAPTER III.

"Lips busy and eyes fix'd, foot falling slow,
Arms hanging idly down, hands clasp'd below,
Interpret to the marking eye distress,
Such as its symptoms can alone express."

COWPER.

WHEN Knockwhinnie parted from Rizzio and Chatelard they walked into the Park, one of the most lonesome places in all the world so near to a royal residence and a great city. It lies between the Palace and Arthur's Seat, not exactly in a valley, but in a shallow hollow between the mountain and the rising ground that spreads up towards the Calton Hill. In those days a high wall enclosed the garden of Holyrood House on the one side, so that nothing could be seen from the bottom of the Park but St. Anthony's Chapel and the cliffs of the mountain, and the high, abrupt, and misty precipices of Salisbury Craigs.

The climate of this solitary retreat, if the expression may be allowed, was as bleak as the scene was dreary, violent winds, especially from the south-west, came sweeping round the foot of Salisbury Craigs, and rendered it, though laid out in those days with roads intended to be paths of pleasantness, forlorn and comfortless, except when the air was calm and mild! even

then it was but little frequented, so that at all times it was a fit haunt for the moody meditations of revenge and disappointment. On the present occasion the two adventurers were the only persons within the enclosure, and each towards the other experienced the influence of the morose genius of the solitude.

They walked for some time without speaking. At last Chatelard, who was naturally more communicative, said—

“What think you, Rizzio, I ought to do? It might be attended with hazard, were I to attempt to evade the order to quit the kingdom to-morrow.”

“It might be inconvenient,” replied Rizzio, sedately; “but if the Queen regards you with that distinction which is all the gossip of the Palace this morning, the risk is not such that a young man even of less spirit would hesitate to encounter.”

In saying this the words were weighedly delivered, and the keen scrutiny of the Italian’s dark eye made the secret thoughts and wishes of Chatelard shrink.

“We are strangers in this country, Rizzio, and the inhabitants do not endure our presence willingly. If we have not enemies we have adversaries, and therefore we should stand by one another. I beg you, therefore, to give me your best advice in my present difficulties.”

“I cannot refuse you that, Chatelard; but to enable me to do so you must give me all your sincerest confidence, and by no concealment expose me to the responsibility of having advised you to adopt a course of conduct at variance with actual facts and circumstances.”

The Frenchman assured him that there was nothing he would conceal, and that he was ready to answer every question.

“Then my first,” said Rizzio, “will be a plain one.”

There was a lurking exultation in the cunning eye of the Italian as he said this, and especially when he inquired if the Queen had ever, of her own disposition, given him any familiar token of partiality.

Chatelard reddened to crimson, and appeared to hesitate, which induced Rizzio to add—

“Come, you must deal candidly with me or let no more pass between us.”

“She,” said Chatelard, “has at my request granted Knock-whinnie’s pardon.”

“That,” said Rizzio, dryly, “certainly is something, and will be, as you have already experienced, considered great by many.” He, however, thought to himself “this may have

been conceded only to him as the last applicant ; worn out by importunity, she may have merely accidentally then yielded what she was predisposed to grant ;" and he resumed aloud—
 " But in granting Knockwhinnie's pardon on your intercession, she may have thought it would promote your suit with Adelaide, as it would secure to you, from her at least, some sentiment of gratitude."

Chatelard became confused, and, not evincing any disposition to reply, Rizzio said jocularly, but with a cast of sarcasm in his voice,

" Perhaps you don't much care for Adelaide ? In truth, Chatelard, to be plain with you, there has been, I have sometimes thought, more of the tongue than of the heart in the professions of your love for her. You may as well, therefore, out with the truth."

" Would you have me read a recantation ? I will, however, tell you all. I have felt all the enchantments of the passion : but while I spoke of Adelaide, my fancy was engaged with another."

" I thought so," replied Rizzio ; " and I think that other may be guessed at."

Chatelard was startled at hearing this. He had imagined that he had acted with so much dexterity and address, that no one could have detected his devotion to the Queen ; for Love is not only blind to the defects of its object, but insensible to its own nakedness.

" But," continued Rizzio, " we lose time : you promised the confidence of a confession, and yet you appear to keep only the promise to the ear. Come, come ! there must be no evasion with me. You have been, ever since our voyage, up to the ears in love with the Queen."

" The Queen !" echoed Chatelard, with a sardonic laugh. " You take great freedom with her Majesty, to say so !"

" How ! I did not say she was in love with you ! Now the pith of your case lies three. It is a natural sentiment that a young man should be fascinated by such desirable beauty ; but tell me now in what other way, than by Knockwhinnie's pardon, have you received from her any mark of preference ?"

" I think," replied Chatelard, puzzled at being so closely pressed, " you have watched too well not to have discovered the pleasure she takes in hearing me sing ?"

" Yes, you are an eloquent singer ; there is no other so tasteful among all her musicians ; but whether it was for your—

self, or for your song, that you have been so frequent a guest at her suppers, might trouble a casuist to determine."

While Rizzio was thus probing the bosom of the vain but unsuspecting Chatelard, his victim became more and more entangled in his toils.

"Have you had no other sign of preference than her delight in your melodies?"

"In sooth," said the Frenchman, "love-tokens are not so palpable as to be made very obvious to third parties: but she hath always presented her hand to me. To no other of the guests at her familiar entertainments hath she ever vouchsafed the distinction."

"Hem! that is touching the matter more closely. Have you ever by accident been left alone with her?"

"Yes, several times, when my duty called me to consult the answers to be given to letters and missives from Rome and Paris."

"And what was her manner on such occasions?"

"Sometimes gracious and bland, encouraging me freely to speak my mind; but of late she hath much changed, and has been on such occasions reserved and ceremonious."

"Ay," said Rizzio; "that looks as if she had some knowledge of your affection, and would repress it; she therefore needs no declaration to tell her of the ardour with which you have been fired."

"I think so too; I cannot doubt it; for twice, when I have pressed her hand with tender eagerness, she hath snatched it away, conscious of the touch."

"Have you done so already? By my troth, Chatelard! you are nearer the consummation of your fortunes than I thought. I pray you, when you are master, to remember that I was once your friend. Seek no mediator with her; but find some opportunity to speak yourself for yourself. I see between you and great prosperity but the frail barrier of diffidence and modesty. Be you bold, and fear not her blushes. I know not that I can say more. Upon yourself depends your fortunes; and, believe me, let us henceforth not be seen too much or openly together. Yours is a task that but yourself can toil in; and let me say again, when you are master, forget not that we were once coequal and confiding friends. As the wind has set this morning, be none surprised that you see me put on the mask of a changed look; be not offended at it. Insooth, Chatelard, were I in your shoes, let the wind blow high or low, I should

not sail to-morrow for France, nor be many hours till I had thrown for the stake I play for."

Rizzio soon after left him, and Chatelard continued to walk in the solitary park alone. The occasional passer-by, who saw him ruminating there, and who had heard of his dismissal, moralized on the uncertain fortunes of those who put their trust in princes. But his ruminations were not of the pale hue of dejection; they were rich with the crimson of ambition: the insinuations of Rizzio had infected his vanity, and, like the ingredients of a sorcerer's spell, bewitched his imagination with dangerous illusions.

At first his mind ran riot; he fancied all the gorgeous and delightful visions of his intoxicated passion realized, and schemed, upon that supposition, as to the department he would assume in the state, and the vengeance he would inflict on Dufroy, to whom alone he attributed his humiliation. This effervescence, however, soon subsided; and he found that much was to be done, before it could be in his power even to feel himself safe in Scotland. Access to the Queen was forbidden; and it was from herself alone that he could hope even for indulgence only to remain. Here the suggestion of the Italian's machination took effect; and he exclaimed, with some vehemence of gesture,

"I will see her! I will hazard something to attain an interview! The prize is immeasurable; and men of greater weight, without half of my motive, have not scrupled to hazard life in a meaner pursuit. I dally with my destiny, in allowing others to stand upon the vantage-ground against me."

Thus, in loose reflections, but not without aim, he continued his soliloquy, till, having wound himself up to the resolution of obtaining access to the Queen, he began to meditate on the means, and concluded, that by Knockwhinnie, and his influence with his daughter, it was not impossible he might obtain admission into her Majesty's apartments. No time was to be lost in carrying this design into effect. The remainder of that day, and the night, was all he had left to accomplish it.

CHAPTER IV.

"Yet innocence and virgin modesty,
Her virtue, and the conscience of her worth,
That would be wooed, and not unsought be won."

MILTON.

WE shall pass over the interview between Knockwhinnie and his daughter ; but in doing so, it is not the Grecian's veil that we draw. There were no such circumstances in their mutual or respective feelings to make this necessary. The one knew not the other, even by sight. It was only some undefinable deference for the opinion which the world holds of fatherly feelings and filial duties, that made their first meeting interesting. A few natural tears they shed, befitting the occasion ; but we should do injustice to the candour of Adelaide's character, were we to describe her emotion as more than the homage of custom.

Knockwhinnie himself was delighted with his daughter. Who, indeed, had ever looked upon her without sentiments of pleasure ? and yet it was a pleasure mingled with compassion, for her loveliness was pale and fragile ; bespeaking by the simple elegance of her manners, protection and help. Her father could do no less than obey the influence of nature when he first beheld her : but she probably felt less than he did ; for the generosity of the firm and calm Dufroy had prevented her from suffering the sorrow and the anxieties of the orphan condition in which she had been left.

While they were together, Dufroy, not aware that Knockwhinnie was with her, entered her apartment with his accustomed freedom. We have already stated that he was influenced by a secret though not very strong anger against her father ; and this, no doubt, had an influence on his demeanour towards him. Perhaps also, for we must speak of men as they are, the Count was not altogether well pleased at Knockwhinnie, merely from the manner in which his pardon had been obtained ; for when the feelings have once been ravelled, they are seldom ever afterward restored to the simplicity of the natural skein. We should do wrong, however,

to the high sentiments of that nobleman, were we to allege that he was absolutely disturbed at the pardon, as respected Knockwhinnie personally, although he considered it a manifestation of clemency inconsistent with public justice.

A cold dry interchange of recognition was all that took place between them. The Count congratulated Adelaide on the restoration of her father ; and, with the expression of a few formal civilities, left them together.

The character of Knockwhinnie, from his wild and hunted life, had undergone an impressive change. In youth he had been distinguished for the courtly gallantry which was common to the young gentry of the country in those days ; and he was naturally prompt in determination, and adventurous in action. He possessed also the best substance of the virtues connected with these attributes ; but a long series of anxieties had made him susceptible to the slightest alarm ; and he distrusted, more or less, all with whom he had not been before his outlawry well acquainted. Constant tribulation had made him irascible far beyond his constitutional temperament. A small matter, like a mote in the eye, afflicted him beyond his power of endurance ; and had the effect of so corroding his milder qualities, that the friends who recollected him in the urbanity of his younger years, could hardly discern in the pardoned Outlaw the same individual whom they had formerly known. The change was not, however, of a vital nature ; it was but an incrustation—the broken and rugged ice, under which the stream continued to flow in its natural purity—the snow, under which the power of vegetation suffered no diminution—the brown and rough clods, under which the seed was germinating with undiminished vigour. His manners were abrupt, but sensitive,—the effects of his perils and mischances : his sensibility however an inherent quality, was contracted in quality, if we may so say, and augmented in intensity. The elements of goodness were strong within him ; and those who liked him least at first, liked him most in the end. It might be said, that he was a man of harsh manners, but, nevertheless, he was full of mercy, generosity, and affection.

On such a character it is needless to say that Adelaide's account of the tenderness and care, which she had experienced from the Count Dufroy, produced a strong impression. It could not at once extinguish the long-cherished animosity which he had entertained against him, but it disposed him, with the conviction of the Count's blamelessness, to wish he could better

esteem that nobleman ; and he said to Adelaide with warmth, that he would endeavour to prove how justly he valued the disinterested kindness with which he had so fostered and protected her.

In the course of conversation he spoke also with the warmth of grateful feelings for the obligation he owed to Chatelard, and assured Adelaide, that although, but for that service, he would have preferred Southennan ; yet, if the young Frenchman was really disposed to accept her hand, it would be his study and delight to promote their happiness ; and he concluded by saying it would be a false modesty on her part, her attachment being so generally suspected, not to do all in her power to avert the execution of the sentence of expulsion which Dufroy had obtained against him.

In this advice there was doubtless the plain-dealing of a mind habituated to hasty decisions ; but it was delicate and dignified in the gentle spirit of Adelaide to make no objection to the suggestion ;

" I may never," said she, " obtain his love, but I can deserve his esteem."

Little did either father or daughter imagine, when arranging this blameless plot, in which gratitude and love were the only conspirators, that they were laying the foundations of a plan, by which he, whom they were so anxious to serve, would be utterly ruined.

In the mean time the Queen, much disturbed by the transactions of the morning, was dissatisfied with her own want of decision. She clearly perceived that she had done something wrong, not in the act itself, but from her own easiness of nature in the manner of doing it. She saw that, although she had yielded with candour and even with alacrity to the advice of the Count Dufroy, whom she esteemed as her trustiest friend, in banishing Chatelard, that she had only furnished fuel to the beacons of detraction. She condemned herself for having, in a momentary fit of spleen, sacrificed, as she was sure it would be considered, her own dignity, and it was impossible to disguise to herself, that in consenting to dismiss Chatelard, and to drive him forth the kingdom, there was some acknowledgment of danger being in his presence. All her feelings were warped and disordered by this reflection. She wished it were possible to recall the mandate of expulsion, and merely to confine the penalty to the dismissal. But her orders had been published ; she could not rescind them without giving fresh cause for suspicion, and she had endured, both from her brother,

the Prior of St. Andrew's, and the Earl of Morton, as well as other influential counsellors, both of the popish and reformed factions, austere admonitions for her weakness and irresolution. It may, therefore, be easily imagined, that after the departure of Knockwhinnie, when Adelaide joined her Majesty, she was in no better state of mind to resist the application of Adelaide to mitigate the sentence of Chatelard, than she was to resist his application for the pardon of Knockwhinnie. Experience, however, of the inconvenience that might arise from the indulgence of generosity, had, in the course of the day, taught her to be less precipitate. She promised Adelaide to take her entreaty into consideration, and to use the best reasons in her power, to bring her confidential friends to acquiesce in the mitigation.

"Alas!" said she, "how little is it in the power of royalty even to indulge itself in the desire to soften misfortune. Oh, my gentle Adelaide, I am not fit to withstand the cabals that surround me. Would it had pleased heaven to have cast my lot in a humbler sphere. I feel that, as an honoured gentlewoman, I could have dispensed and received happiness. But Heaven forfend me from the fulfilment of the omens which darken in the future! Whom have I to advise me? I am upon a pinnacle; every wind blows upon me; I cannot move without the risk of falling; and for a queen to fall is never to rise again. Look all around; there is not one half so forlorn. You have a father and Dufroy; but from my childhood I have been a lonely orphan, and since I came ill-fated to this country, the aspect of every day has been more dismal than the past. But the daughter of a hundred kings will not shrink in her trials; honour, felicity, love, and renown, are never to be mine; but I feel an assurance in my heart, that the malice of adversity shall never subdue me!"

CHAPTER V.

"What I can do I will."

OTHELLO.

WHILE the deep bass of court intrigue and machination was thus shaking the heart of the Sovereign, the shrill clear treble of lighter affairs was vibrating through the hearts of private individuals, and the appogiaturas of small afflictions increased

the effect, without adding to the importance of Mistress Marjory's share in the diapason. She had never been able to reconcile herself to Southennan for the manner in which he rejected her preposition to accompany him to the Reception. She could not exactly, as any modern Edinburgh landlady may possibly have done, during the late royal visit, complain of him as an upstart. Looms were not in those days utterly unknown, but steam-engines and spinning jennies were visions that had not dawned even in the prospective horizon of philosophical anticipation. Southennan, a scion of an ancient stock, was in all respects her equal, or rather her superior; but he was not altogether free, in her opinion, from blame. He had been in France, as she understood, and therefore ought to have known something of good manners; but he had been among the Englishers, whom every true Scotchwoman and Scotchman believed were, in those days, a sort of anthropophagi.

The effect of her antipathy made the dignified and pedigreed Mistress Marjory withhold the light of her countenance, as much as possible, from our hero, and in her confidential confabulations with her kinsman Auchenbrae, to expatiate on the indignities she had suffered. Unfortunately, however, her auditor was not in such matters particularly sympathetic. He certainly lamented with her the decay of courtly breeding in the country, the increasing presumption of the lower orders, and the sneaking disposition of the higher to court, not only one another who had any thing to give, but to address themselves, cap-in-hand, to the rabble. All these things, Mistress Marjory correctly observed, were signs that a mutation was going on, and it was clear to her, that the end would be confusion. Auchenbrae, though loose enough, God wot! both in patriotism and principle, was not exactly of this opinion, and he endeavoured to smooth her bristles by comforting her with the assurance, that the demolition of the monasteries would increase the consequence of the nobility, by driving out of competition with them, the mitred abbots, the lordly priors, and the other proud and pampered ecclesiastics, who like locusts, ate up the green blades of the pastures.

"Weel," said Mistress Marjory, as they were one afternoon discussing the controversy of the Reformation, and beheld through the north window of her parlour the religious house of Inchkeith in flames, "I never heard sic a sensible account o' the Reformation before; for between you and me, though in the way o' a peace-offering, the kirk allowed the Lazaruses o' the nobility to pick up the crumbs that fell from her table, she

ay keepit the main banquet for her ain children, the whilk I hae heard my grand-uncle, Lord Archibald, tell, would sooner or latter breed a feud in the realm, for it wasna' to be thought that the nobility and gentry would endure to see themselves coped wi' by sic a wiveless and bairnless herd o' a priesthood, that had nae other superiority but book-lear, and something that they call philosophy. Really, Auchenbrae, I'll be turning round too; but I fear its no ordained for womankind to get either a shave o' the loaf, or a slice o' the round."

Auchenbrae told her that he was much inclined to the same way of thinking.

"The only doubt I have," said he, "is, if they would refrain from persecuting me, even if I did turn reformer."

"That's a natural dubiety, Auchenbrae; and I would advise you to keep clear o' the fangs and teeth o' persecution as lang as ye can, for I misdoubt if ye're in a condition to be a martyr."

"Well," said he, "but tell me, my kind cousin, what I ought to do; for here am I chased and hunted like a fox, and lying hiding in your house, to the great discomfort of yourself and the waste of victuals in your aumry. Have you no friend, cousin, at the Court, that would soften the Queen's ear for my benefit?"

"Hech hey," replied Mistress Marjory; "as wealth wadders, worth weakens; wha could I speak to? My uncle, the Lord Archibald, is dead and gane, and my second cousin is only a laddie. I trust he'll mend in time! and there's need for't; for really he looks as if he would be never better than a sucking turkey."

"No doubt," rejoined Auchenbrae, "what you say is very true; but could not you put on your cockernonie and your cardinal, and go to your old friend the Earl of Morton, and make intercession for me; for though he is a gruesome carle, he is yet lightly won they say by ladies' charms; and I have heard the Queen can wind him round her finger."

"Hah, Auchenbrae, that was a benison ye should hae asked twenty years ago, when I was conjunc' wi' his Lordship; for ye ken he's baith kith and kin to us. Ah, Auchenbrae, I ha'e lost twa front teeth—mark o' mouth—its an undertaking I darena' attempt."

"Had your adversary, Mistress Marjory, said so in my hearing, I'll not tell you what might have been the upshot; but you misliken your powers of pleasing. Sure am I you might do something for me with the Lord Morton. But if you think

it is an impossibility, is not there past Bailie Brown, that still rules the Town Council ; could not you try your pawkrie with him ?”

“ That,” replied the lady, “ needs nae putting up to ; but his wife, ye ken, is sib to your auld adversary Knockwhinnie, against whom ye hae sworn a heavenly animosity, as if he were the Incarnated himself.”

“ Well,” said Auchenbrae, with something between a grumble and a sigh, “ my situation is more helpless than I thought. However, Mistress Marjory, as you are a lady both of gumption and talons, as I may say, I put my despair into your hands—worse it cannot be made ; and, if it be possible, your friendliness may make it better. At present I am forlorn and useless.”

Mistress Marjory, notwithstanding the jocular vein in which Auchenbrae spoke, heard him with sorrow ; but, like her sex, in the greatest straits she was not without resources. From the time that Southennan had become her lodger, she had held many sweet and precious communings with Father Jerome ; she knew that he was a familiar and accepted coadjutor in the councils of the Abbot of Kilwinning ; and she thought that possibly she might be able so to work with him as to procure his good will with the Abbot on behalf of her kinsman.

“ No,” said she, when she spoke to the holy Father on the subject, “ that I think Auchenbrae, whom ye better ken as Friar Michael, is just an innocent lamb. He has his fau’ts ; wha hasna’ that’s come o’ gentle blood ?—it’s the very testification o’ the purity o’ his pedigree ; but in the main he’s a free jocose gentleman, and would be an honour to the Queen’s Court, if he were a thought better schooled.”

Father Jerome told her that he had a great friendship for Auchenbrae ;

“ But really,” he added, “ Madam, these are not times when either by fee or favour the church should espouse malefactors. I have a great dread that Auchenbrae is one of that sort, and my Lord Abbot is minded never to let a black sheep again into our folds.”

“ I ay,” replied the lady, “ thought ye were a bye ordinar discreet man, and what ye hae said shows that ye’re no void o’ a’ sagacity ; but nae doubt, though it may no be a very comely thing for you to make or meddle in this matter wi’ the Lord Abbot, surely ye might gie me a bit inkling o’ what would be efficacious.”

Then,” replied Father Jerome, “ speak to our Laird ; he

has got a pith and power at the Court that's a perplexity to me."

"Your Laird!" exclaimed the lady, indignant at the proposition, all her wrath mounting into a blaze with the remembrance of the contumely with which he had treated her; "your Laird! would I ask him! I would sooner—but I'll no say what he is."

While they were thus speaking, Southennan came to the door, and was admitted by Hughoc.

"Oh, megsty Laird!" said the boy, "but ye're come in the nick o' time. Father Michael is in this house, and has been keeleaving wi' Mistress Marjory in her own chamber; and they, with the help o' Father Jerome's counsel, are plotting to tye an auld pan to your tail."

"How heard you this?" said Southennan, laughing.

"Od, ye see I'm a true and faithfu' servant, and I hae nae broo o' the folk o' this town; so I gaed to the key-hole, and put my e'e first, and syne my lug, to see and to hear what they were gallanting about; and when the leddy, after her exploit wi' Friar Michael, jooke'd out o' the room to Father Jerome, I gaed to hearken there likewise. Oh Laird! what a hard servitude I ha'e had ever since we came into this town; I never ha'e a right wink o' sleep on account o' the troubles o' my curiosity; and over and above all, our Baldy has just turned a demented creature. I dinna think, Laird, ye'll be able to thole wi' him long; and I'm sure ye'll no get a laddie that will be mair eydant than I ha'e been; and I'm a year aulder than when your father, the grand Laird Walter, made him his body servant."

Southennan was amused at the cunning and simplicity of the boy, and flattered his hopes and his vanity by telling him, that since they had come into Edinburgh he had certainly, both in adroitness and intelligence, surpassed his expectations.

CHAPTER XXV.

"I would I might entreat your honour
To scan this thing."

OTHELLO.

THE anxieties of the day, the steep streets, and Mistress Marjory's high stairs, had, in the words of the town-clerk, made our hero so "exhaust and forefoughten," that he required some recruiting stimulus, and accordingly gave orders to prepare a stoup of hippocras. When it was ready Baldy brought it into the room, leaving the door accidentally open, by which Hughoc was seen listening on the outside, concealed, but looking from time to time in.

"I'm thinking," said Baldy, as he placed the flagon on the table, "that the Laird will find this savoury drink. I wish a' the Queen's lieges had as gude comfort. As for Knockwhinnie, our auld fellow-traveller, he stands I'm thinking, but little in need o't. It's comfort enough in a'e day for an outlaw to get his pardon. He's well off; but Auchenbrae's to be pitied; hunted to the ends of the earth as if he were na'e better than a tod lowry. Will the drink do?"

Hughoc during this speech looked in from the lobby, and shook his forefinger in an admonitory manner to his master.

Baldy continued,

"Some folks say, Laird, that ye ha'e been instrumental in getting Knockwhinnie's pardon, and I'll no deny that ye may therein ha'e done a merciful almous; but surely a man that would take anither's life wi' cauld iron, is a far blacker malefactor than a free-hearted gentleman giving a slap on the back wi' only the butt end o' his whip to a doited carle, tho' he was birsling his shins at his ain fire-side. If I might be sae bold, Laird, I would make an intercession for a help o' your hand to relieve Auchenbrae."

Hughoc had stepped full in front of the door, and when he heard this he raised his hands, and looked with amazement, as if each particular orifice in his countenance had been an organ of sight. His master could not, without a struggle, prevent himself from laughing at the droll physiognomy of the boy; and

Baldy, seeing the smile struggling through, attributed it to the progress of compassion and sympathy.

"I'm sure, Laird," said he, "ye'll no refuse the sma' favour o' interceding wi' the Queen's Majesty for Auchenbrae. I dinna say he's a clear innocent man; hut far waur' than him ha'e before now been spared to a gude auld age without fear o' the wuddy."

Hughoc could not stand this; so he came into the room, and lifting the flagon with the hippocras, not knowing what other pretext to make for his intrusion, carried it off.

"What do you mean by that? come back with it!" exclaimed Southennan.

Hughoc replaced it on the table, and looking with the fierceness of a terrier at Baldy, sullenly retired to the lobby again.

"That laddie," said Baldy, "is either gain aff at the head, or growing a Protestant; for he has nae mair reverence for me now, sic is the corruption o' the court and the city, than if I were a broom besom. Wherever I gang, if he's no on duty wi' you, he follows me like a messin, and lays his lug to every word that's said, just like a filler in the mouth o' a Rotterdam graybeard; nae drap, nae word of speech can fa' past't."

The wrath of Hughoc at this backbiting was neither to hold nor to bind; he sprung into the room, and shaking his fist at Baldy, said,

"Ah, ye crab, ye leeing scouter! Ye're a black neb."

Southennan, to keep peace, ordered the boy to retire, and to shut the door, and to show more respect to his elder. This decision was duly appreciated by Baldy, who proceeded to urge more and more distinctly and decidedly the kindness that would be conferred by procuring remission of Auchenbrae's offence.

It appeared to Southennan somewhat extraordinary, that Baldy, so much of a sudden, should have interfered so strongly on behalf of Auchenbrae, especially as he well knew that their acquaintance was very slight indeed, and that Knockwhinnie, his own particular friend, (for by this time he so considered him), had been vitally injured by that delinquent. Doubtless the reports which Hughoc had made of the intrigues of Baldy and Father Jerome had not been without effect on his mind, and he recollected also with some degree of heat, that he was supposed to be circumvented by his servant. He, however, said nothing, but allowed Baldy to finish his exhortation, at the

end of which he looked at him steadily, and then said, with unusual emphasis,

"You have been long a faithful servant in my family ; but you must not attempt to render me subservient to any plan in which you are concerned, whether it be for religion, policy, or interest. I will not interfere on behalf of Auchenbrae, and you will remember never to speak in his behalf to me again."

Baldy instantly retired, and presently a yelling was heard in the house, caused by the crusty old man indemnifying himself for the reproof he had received at the expense of Hughoc. Soon after, Baldy went out, and the time being near when the frequenters of the Unicorn were in the practice of assembling in the evening, Southennan went to join them. On entering the room he was surprised, and uneasily so, at seeing Knock-whinnie and Chatelard sitting together, seemingly in serious confidential conversation. He was still more struck on perceiving, that when they observed him they changed their topic, and addressed him as if they intended he should think there was nothing particular in the matter of their whispered discussion. Among other guests who subsequently came in was Rizzio, whose air and demeanour towards Chatelard surprised him still more. It had never occurred to him, that there had been any such misconduct in the cause of Chatelard's dismissal as to impose a change in the manner of his friends ; but Rizzio was conspicuously reserved, and scarcely seemed to recognise him. His look was so dry and cold, that he seemed as if he had endured some offence at his hands ; indeed, his whole behaviour was so estranged, that it repressed the wish which our hero felt to inquire what occurrence had so ruptured their former intimacy.

On the part of Chatelard the alienation was not so obvious ; but he seemed to feel no annoyance at the manner in which he was treated by Rizzio ; on the contrary, he appeared not only as if he were acquainted with the cause, but that he attached no importance to it. Indeed, he so far appeared to forget it that, in the course of a few minutes, he rose and attempted to take hold of Rizzio's arm in his old familiar manner ; but the Italian turned sharply round, and with an impressive look, made him desist. In this there was something so like mystery that it did not satisfy our hero ; and he could not resist the suspicion of some arrangement having been secretly concerted between them. Nor, after the crafty conversation which he had held on the preceding day with the Italian in the same room, was it without warranty.

Chatelard having resumed his seat beside Knockwhinnie, Southennan joined Rizzio, and inquired in a friendly tone, what had happened to cause so great a change in his demeanour towards the Frenchman.

"The nature of Chatelard's imputed offence," said he, "renders it necessary that the confidential servants of the Queen should separate themselves entirely from him; it may else be supposed that we have been privy to his presumption, and ought to have informed the Chancellor, or the prior of St. Andrews, of what we had observed."

Southennan stepped back in astonishment at this *ex post facto* prudence, and said,

"How is this? You observed how much he was enamoured of the Queen as early as I did, and the fault of concealment has already been committed."

The Italian not being well prepared for this home-thrust, looked confused.

"Come, come," exclaimed Southennan, "no masquerading with me; there is something going on between you. I hope it has no other object than to procure his restoration to the Queen's service."

Rizzio bit his lips with vexation; for the deepest cunning cannot always provide against the plain dealing of simplicity and honour. His answer, however, was firmly delivered, and was irresistibly plausible.

"Until it has been seen how such things thrive, it is not wise to blab of what one may know. Had Chatelard prospered in his bold passion, where should I have been now, had I betrayed my suspicions; for after all they were but suspicions. Courts are epitomes of the world; nothing is bad in them until it is known. The Spartan law is that also of all courts—it is the discovery that makes the crime; and I would advise you, as a candidate for public employments, to study the lesson."

This speech grated the hearing of Southennan, and made him feel something like distaste against Rizzio. He had often before experienced the same repugnance, but in this instance it was tintured with dread, and he was awed by the too evident craft and capacity of his character.

While they were speaking apart, Knockwhinnie and Chatelard left the room somewhat abruptly together. Their evasion was, no doubt, intended to appear an incidental occurrence, but it was done in such haste and hurry, that it attracted the attention of several gentlemen, and occasioned a temporary suspension of their conversation.

Rizzio, whose quick eye allowed nothing to escape unobserved, said—

“What has so suddenly affected your friends? They appear to have been roused on the instant to some undertaking, and it is a grave one; for neither of them have art of countenance enough to hide the indications of their thoughts. It cannot be that Knockwhinnie has consented to give him his daughter?”

This suggestion was so much in unison with the apprehensions of our hero, that it seemed as probable as it was alarming. Finding himself in consequence unable to conceal his emotion, he turned round to Cornylees, who had just entered, and taking him by the arm, requested him to walk into the air with him, as the room was close, and it was yet a full half-hour to supper time.

CHAPTER VII.

“Good things of day begin to droop and drouze,
And evil things themselves do rouse.”

MACBETH.

THE subject of the conversation of Knockwhinnie with Chatelard was an effect of the suggestions of Rizzio in the Park. The Frenchman was determined to make an effort to see the Queen; he had but that night left to accomplish his purpose, and when Knockwhinnie was expressing his sorrow in being the unconscious cause of his dismissal, he adroitly represented, that if he could possibly obtain an audience of her Majesty, he was convinced that he would be immediately reinstated in his employments.

Knockwhinnie had as yet heard but few particulars of the story. The representation was plausible, and he voluntarily proposed that they should at once proceed to the palace, and endeavour, by the means of Adelaide, to obtain a secret interview with her Majesty. This occasioned their sudden departure from the Unicorn.

On reaching Holyrood House, Chatelard, who was acquainted with the private passages and back stairs, conducted Knockwhinnie to the special apartment of Adelaide, and they deemed themselves fortunate in finding her there alone.

At their entrance she was in tears; and when she saw Chatelard with her father she uttered a faint and feeble shriek, which sufficiently indicated the cause and the subject of her sorrow.

Her father began to relate the purpose of their visit by reiterating the obligations for which he was indebted to Chatelard, and to lament that it had been visited by such fatal consequences to himself.

"There is," said Knockwhinnie, "no other alternative but for him to see the Queen; he is persuaded that she will remit the dismissal; at all events allow him to remain in Scotland, and then"—

He smiled on Chatelard, and taking the hand of Adelaide, presented it to him; but to his surprise, she hastily withdrew it.

"How can I comply with your request," said Adelaide to her father, "without offending the commands of her Majesty, and incurring the reproach of the Count, who would regard such disobedience as dishonourable."

The mention of Dufroy's name, and in that manner, stung Knockwhinnie, and he replied with some degree of severity—

"It is thus you obey your newly-found father?"

Adelaide made no reply, but said to Chatelard—

"I doubt if the Queen will receive you as you expect. Be not deceived; she has been subjected to remonstrance on your account already. Why do you hope that your application will have more weight than another's with her? I cannot comply with my father's request; but I will go to her Majesty, and solicit her grace for you with all the earnestness in my power."

This firmness in the mild and maidenly Adelaide checked the answer that her father intended to return, and sitting down he told her that they would wait till she came back.

The room was hung with tapestry, as we have already described, exhibiting the parting of Dido and Æneas. As Knockwhinnie looked at it by the light on the table, it seemed to him to represent some similitude to the crisis in which the fortunes of Chatelard and his daughter then stood, and he continued looking at the picture for some time without speaking.

Instead of proceeding to the Queen's apartment by the door which communicated with the gallery, Adelaide lifted a corner of the arras, behind which was a door that led to the Queen's bed-chamber, where her Majesty was then dressing for the evening. With this concealed entrance Chatelard was not before acquainted, and he looked at it so eagerly when it was opened, that Knockwhinnie encouraged him to follow

Adelaide ; but he at that time durst not venture ; it was a step too bold ; but the advice was not lost upon him ; for although it was not exactly to the same effect as the insidious suggestions of Rizzio, it was yet in accordance with their spirit. Adelaide was not long absent ; her mission had failed ; the Queen interrupted her in the very overture and exordium of her solicitation, and declared that she had been so offended by the presumption of Chatelard, that she would no longer permit his name to be repeated in her presence. Adelaide communicated this with considerable emotion ; but she concealed that she had been chided by the Queen for having so far forgot her native modesty in undertaking the mediation ; for she had not thought it requisite to mention how she had been urged by her father.

It being now the hour when the Queen's evening circle was formed, Adelaide was obliged to leave them, and it was perhaps fortunate for herself that the claim of duty denied the opportunity of a formal farewell. She felt indeed that it would be a scene more trying than she could, with becoming propriety, support, and accordingly she hastily returned to the Queen, leaving her father and Chatelard together. From the moment of her exit the Frenchman became evidently restless and impatient, until they had left the apartment.

The door which communicated with the private stairs by which they had ascended could only be secured by a bolt and staple on the inner side. Chatelard had remarked this, but it escaped the observation of Knockwhinnie. The thoughts which in the mean time were passing in the mind of the Frenchman, were soon manifested. In leaving the apartment he contrived that Knockwhinnie should precede him, and he affected, when he came out, to be particular in closing the door. The darkness of the staircase facilitated his stratagem.

They then returned to the Unicorn, and reached the door as Rizzio was coming out. Full of his intent, but not daring to breathe it, Chatelard, looking significantly and exultingly, pressed him by the hand in silence as he passed. The hint, however, was sufficient ; the Italian, without much reflection, conjectured that somehow, by the mediation of Adelaide, the predoomed young man was to obtain access to the Queen.

In the mean time Southennan and Cornylees had strolled towards the Palace ; and the former, without assigning any reason for not returning to supper, though the Laird was hungry and importunate, lingered round the precincts till he saw Chatelard and Knockwhinnie returning. He then affected

compliance with the impatience of Cornylees ; but soon after meeting Rizzio, he stopped to speak with him, and allowed the Laird to proceed alone.

The manner of Rizzio was now already altered ; he was eager, vivacious, and excited. He requested, nay, insisted on Southennan returning with him to the Palace ; he even expressed something like a congratulation that he was soon likely to be successful in his love ; his whole manner, and even the sound of his voice, betokened extreme animation ; insomuch that, although our hero repressed his inclination to inquire what had put him into such spirits, he could not resist his curiosity to see on what account Rizzio so earnestly, at that unwonted hour, sought his company.

On ascending the great stairs, Rizzio begged Southennan to remain in the gallery.

"I shall," said he, "only pay my homage, and return to you. Something will probably take place this evening that may change the colour of Chatelard's condition. I wish you, therefore, to wait, that you may see in what the event will come to pass."

He then left Southennan in the gallery, where a number of gentlemen, not that night admitted to the presence, were playing at cards and chess. Without attaching himself to any party, our hero sat down and overlooked the card-players. Rizzio, however, did not return as soon as he expected, and he began to think with himself that it was useless to remain much later. In this notion he was confirmed by one of the gentlemen of the chamber coming from her Majesty, and who remarked that he had never seen her look more beautiful, nor in happier spirits, adding, that it would probably be late before she retired.

Southennan, on hearing this, gave up all hope of seeing Rizzio again, and descended into the court to return home ; but as he was crossing to the portal he saw the shadow of a man pass on the wall from a lamp which hung within a door that happened to be then open. Though it was but a shadow, which glided in a moment away, there was something in the contour of the figure that led him to fancy it was Chatelard. Without waiting, however, to ascertain the fact, he proceeded to the Unicorn, where, as he expected, he found Knockwhinnie and Cornylees engaged with a flask of Balwham's old sherries before them, discussing some important point concerning Cornylees's horse which he was disposed to sell, and for the same reason that he had offered his velvet suit for sale.

"Man Knockwhinnie," said he, "in course now, ye sal ha'e the braw beast for little mair than the wind o' your mouth. I wouldna' ha'e parted wi' it for twice the double o' the siller, but my purse has had, ever since I came to Embro', a sever bowel complaint; in course now, frae making owre free wi the Maister Balwham's dainties and in fairings to the latheron in the Cowgate."

Southennan joined them, and a fresh flask was opened; but he had scarce taken a glass, when Knockwhinnie, looking round the room, expressed his surprise at the disappearance of Chatelard, which recalled to Southennan's mind the shadow he had seen, and induced him to return to the Palace before the flask was finished, drawn as it were thither by some inscrutable attraction.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Ring the alarum bell!"

MACBETH.

WHEN Southennan left the Unicorn, he was met by Hughoc, with a horn bowet in his hand, come, according to nightly custom, to conduct his master home in safety through the nocturnal "flowers of Edinburgh," which about that hour perfumed the ambient air, amidst the nightingale sounds of *gardez l'eau*, and the dashing of falling waters.

Edinburgh has probably been reformed in that indifferently since those days, and in the lapse of ages may reform it altogether; still we doubt if, with all the improvements in the High-street, any increase has been given to its picturesque effect when glimmeringly lighted up, as it then was by bowets and the moonlight. The houses were of lath and plaster, white washed, and the cross beams painted black. Innumerable tall gables rose, crested with vanes and balls; and huge balconies, like the stern galleries of a Dutch man-of-war, projected over the street. When the moon shone bright, the effect of the black and white tenements was almost ghastly in the silence of the night, and the dim small wicks, that rather illuminated than shone from the horn lanterns, and which had only a short time

before been introduced, proved how ineffectual they were for their trust.

Our hero on this occasion dispensed with his boy's attendance, and bade him return home, as he was going to the Palace, and might there be detained late.

"What!" said Hughoc to himself, as he was ascending towards the Cross, "what can he hae to do at the Palace at sic an untimous hour? I wish a' may be gaun right wi' the Queen and the Government. I would like to ken! If I want my sleep, what will the master be the waur of the sacrifice? Od, I'll gang down to the Palace too, and the guard will let me sit in the guard-house; for I'll let them see my bowot, and just say I'm come to bide for my master."

He accordingly turned round, and was snug in a corner of the guard-house before Southennan had well resumed his place beside the card-players in the gallery, where he had not long been when, much to his surprise, Knockwhinnie made his appearance.

Southennan affected not to observe him. He had not, indeed, that day been much satisfied with the abrupt partiality with which he had attached himself to Chatelard. It seemed as if he had forgotten his warm professions of regard, and was exclusively interested in the Frenchman.

Whether Knockwhinnie noticed him or not, he did not approach him; for after passing twice up and down the gallery, as if in quest of some person, he went away.

Scarcely had he quitted the gallery, when a bustle and noise was heard in the Queen's apartments; the folding doors were thrown open, and the guests, all joyous and in high glee, came out from her Majesty's presence. A short time elapsed before Rizzio appeared, and when he came his countenance was clouded with dark anxiety, strangely different from the general cheerfulness of the company.

On seeing Southennan he came directly to him, and proposed, as the night was fine, that they should move down into the open air; but Southennan, in the hope that Adelaide would pass through the gallery, and might afford him an opportunity of speaking to her, declined the proposal. Nothing could be more natural or sincere than the manner in which he objected to the proposition; but it would seem that Rizzio thought otherwise; for he looked at him with a sinister and apprehensive eye.

At that moment Adelaide came into the gallery, leaning on the arm of the Count Dufroy. She was evidently dejected,

and seemingly not disposed to linger with the rest of the guests, but Southennan went forward and addressed her. A light conversation took place on different topics, in which no allusion was made to Chatelard's affair; but when the Count conducted her to the door of her apartments, he said, after she had passed in,

"Have you seen any thing of Chatelard?"

Southennan answered, by relating that he had been at the Unicorn, which he left some time before him.

"Do you know where he proposed to lodge to-night?" inquired the Count.

"Did you desire to see him, my Lord; for, although I do not know, yet as he was last with Knockwhinnie, I can easily learn."

"Oh no!" said the Count; "only it has been forgotten to be ascertained if he has been furnished with money for his voyage. I would, therefore, be glad to send him a supply if I knew where."

At this juncture, Southennan observed the door of Adelaide's apartments open, and herself, with a degree of wildness in her gaze, look out. She instantly, however, withdrew; and the door was shut. It would seem that Rizzio had also noticed this; for he went straight to the door, where he stopped, seemingly in a revery, tracing characters with his finger on the panel; but Southennan suspected, from the manner in which he once or twice inadvertently leaned with his ear to the door, that he was listening.

The company in the mean time were dispersing; and in the course of a few minutes, only Rizzio, the Count, and Southennan, remained in the gallery. The Count was in the act of bidding them good night, when the door was again opened, and Adelaide, in still greater terror, looked out. Seeing the company had departed, she came rushing to them, and threw herself, almost in a state of insensibility, into the arms of her adopted father.

"What has alarmed you? What has happened?"

She related, that she had found her room had been entered, and told him that she had been visited by her father; but she concealed that Chatelard had been there with him.

"The intruder," said she, "has entered by the private door; but nothing has been stolen. Every thing is as I left it."

Rizzio, on hearing this, went into the room, and examined it carefully. He was not acquainted with the secret passage which led to the Queen's bed-chamber; but, finding the arras

which hung over the door fluttering in a current of wind, lifted it aside, and saw the passage open. He inquired of Adelaide if she had been acquainted with it before; to which she readily answered in the affirmative; adding, that she had been through it to the Queen in the course of the evening.

The count made light of the story. He said she deserved her fright; for he had no doubt that she had herself to blame for neglecting to fasten the door.

"But some one has been there!" she cried; "and one that has come hastily up from the court below. The prints of his footsteps are on the floor."

Rizzio at this moment returned to the group, and said,

"There has been certainly some one in the room—a man; and he has passed into the passage which leads to the Queen's chamber; but there is no trace that he has yet returned."

"Does any other," said the Count, "know of this passage?"

The question ought not to have troubled Adelaide; but it did; and she was agitated to a great degree, when she replied,

"My father saw me go in to her Majesty, and return."

"It is strange!" said Rizzio, thinking aloud; and, like the other two, he at once concluded that the visit of her father was connected with the incident of her going to the Queen.

Count Dufroy made no remark, but led her back into her own apartment, and returned to the two gentlemen.

"Southennan," said he, "your Scottish air breeds craft. Here is this lovely and ingenuous creature already as adroit at intrigue as the chambermaid of a dowager. I have made light of this matter seemingly; but I suspect her father, out of a proper-enough feeling for the service he has obtained by Chatelard, has persuaded her to disregard the injunctions of her Majesty, and to plead for the imprudent and reckless young man. But her father would not have ventured to intrude upon the Queen's privacy—into her bed-chamber. The thing is incredible!"

"I think so," replied Rizzio. "Moreover, the footstep is that of a smaller man than Knockwhinnie; and the alarm of Adelaide proves that she is convinced the intruder was some other than her father."

Southennan, during this colloquy, said nothing. He had no doubt that Chatelard had been there, and had been with Knockwhinnie during the time they were absent from the Unicorn together. He was convinced also, that the shadow he

had seen was really Chatelard's; and recollecting the brief visit which Knockwhinnie had paid to the gallery, he was inclined to think the Frenchman was still concealed within the apartment. Just at this crisis, a loud screaming was heard from the ladies who were with the Queen. Adelaide came again rushing from her room, into which, sword in hand, the Count instantly ran, and proceeded through the secret passage to the Queen's chamber; while Rizzio and Southennan, also with swords drawn, hurried through the public rooms to the same spot. Adelaide, in dreadful agitation, sank upon the floor; and the alarm spreading, the gallery was almost instantly filled with the guards, and with servants bearing lights and torches.

CHAPTER IX.

"In what particular thought to work, I know not;
But in the gross and scope of my opinion,
'This bodes some strange eruption to our state.'"

HAMLET.

On entering the Queen's bed-chamber, they found her Majesty undressed, and her ladies surrounding her, extending their mantles to conceal her from view. In a corner of the room Chatelard stood overwhelmed with consternation: just as her Majesty was stepping into bed he had been discovered.

The amazement of Count Dufroy and Southennan was indescribable. Rizzio, however, was as collected and self-possessed as if he had been previously acquainted with the treason. The Queen herself was pale and alarmed; some of her ladies were of course screaming at the top of their voices, and others were shaking in every limb like the aspen. The Count, before taking any step, looked steadfastly round the room; and then said to her Majesty, with a parental severity,

"Madam, what is your pleasure with respect to this gentleman!" pointing to Chatelard.

The Queen replied, "Let him be removed from this room; and let the Council be called, and determine concerning him."

By this time all the adjoining rooms and passages were filled with the guards and men-at-arms. The Count sum-

moned four of them to conduct the prisoner to the strong-room belonging to the guard ; and despatched messengers to call the Lords of the Council together. He then said to her Majesty that he would attend her pleasure when she was pleased to summon him ; and withdrew with Southennan and Rizzio.

His behaviour during this remarkable scene was decided, even to sternness ; he was performing what he felt to be a severe public duty : but there was a tone of melancholy and a cast of sadness in his manner, affecting and impressive in the few words which he addressed to the Queen. His emotion was evident to every one, even in the turbulence of the confusion : but the painful sentiment by which he was actuated did not appear until he was at the door of the apartment. He there paused and sighed ; a momentary hesitation detained him on the spot, but his wonted firmness was immediately recovered, and he went back to where the ladies were standing, and approaching with the customary public reverences to royalty, he took hold of the hand of Adelaide and brought her away. This action could not be mistaken ; it produced an instantaneous solemnity : and the Queen, in great agitation, cried to him to remain in attendance, and she would presently see him. He retired from her as respectfully as he had advanced, and conducted his adopted daughter to his own apartment, without speaking ; where he left her, saying,

“ For this night I shall find a chamber for myself in another part of the Palace. To-morrow,” said he, sorrowfully, “ we shall pass from under this roof ; and, if your father does not prohibit the intention, I will conduct you to the old Countess of Kilburnie, your grandmother.”

Adelaide, during the whole time, was incapable of making any reply ; she was engrossed with unutterable fears and apprehensions. The detection of Chatelard in the Queen's bed-chamber overwhelmed her with feelings scarcely less dreadful than horror ; and it was not until the Count had retired, and a flood of tears had come to her relief, that she was able to form any correct conception of the alarm and consternation which still shook the Palace.

The Count, after quitting Adelaide, returned to the gallery, from which the crowd had dispersed ; only Rizzio and Southennan remained.

“ What think you, gentleman,” said he, as he approached them, “ of this humiliating transaction ? ”

"That the Queen has had no hand in it," replied Rizzio alertly.

"And I think so too," rejoined Southennan.

"Then there must have been some incitement or instigation," said the Count; "an attempt so audacious could not have been undertaken without encouragement!"

In saying this, he looked so sharply, that the Italian could not withstand the searching of his eye.

It was now sufficiently manifest that the Count suspected the purity of the Queen; but no word escaped from him which in any degree could be construed to imply that opinion. While they were thus standing together—speaking abruptly at intervals, which showed how much their thoughts were engrossed with the occurrence, the Lady Mary Livingstone came through the apartments of Adelaide from the Queen, to request the attendance of the Count; a summons which he immediately obeyed, leaving that young lady with the two gentlemen.

No sooner had Dufroy left the gallery, than the whole appearance of Rizzio seemed to undergo a transformation; his mien became buoyant, and an irrepressible exultation shone as it were in his looks and gestures. He even ventured to jest with the lively Mary Livingstone, who did not seem to think there was any reason touching life or death in the business: but the levity with which both Rizzio and this arch lady treated the adventure was not infectious: on the contrary, Southennan listened to their ill-timed gayety with distaste. He saw by the manner in which Count Dufroy had been affected, that it was an adventure far more serious than they imagined.

When the Count entered to the Queen's presence he found her alone. Her appearance denoted extreme anxiety, a steady intense feeling, which showed itself in her features and air, but unaccompanied with any visible emotion.

"I cannot," said her Majesty to him, "but discern that you believe me to have been privy and consenting to this most derogatory transaction."

The Count seemed on the point of returning some answer, but suddenly checking himself, he made a profound bow.

"I," resumed the Queen, "I am not surprised that you should put such a construction on it, because the matter of Knockwhinnie's pardon, and other instances of the license which the unhappy young man has allowed himself to take, justify your suspicions. But——," and she rose from her seat, "I neither have forgotten my delicacy nor my dignity. I do not now order, Chatelard to quit the kingdom, but you

will convey to the Chancellor my determination, that his conduct shall be subjected to the utmost rigour of the law, and she cast her eyes with something like entreaty as she said, with undiminished serenity, "verily, Count! it is a cruel trial to the feminine heart to visit with ignominy one whose only offence has been in forgetting the Queen in a passion for the woman."

The Count emphatically said that her commands should be executed, and withdrew.

No incident hitherto in the life of this beautiful and accomplished Princess had ever penetrated her bosom with so harsh an anguish as the lofty and ceremonious deportment of Dufroy on this occasion. She saw him leave the room with every wish to have recalled him; but, conscious of her innocence, and indignant to be so suspected, she remained as immovable as a statue. In this situation she was found by Lady Mary Livingstone, who returned from the gallery as the Count re-entered it.

"Who were the other gentlemen," said the Queen, "that came with the Count when the alarm was given?"

"Rizzio and Southennan."

"Livingstone," replied the Queen, "I am troubled. I dread that this unseemly adventure will come to some bloody issue. I cannot be merciful in this instance, without detriment to my honour, and sanctioning the infectious breath of slander. Go and bid Southennan come to me. He was a witness, and I would learn from himself what impression the discovery has made upon him; and come you back with him."

When Southennan approached her presence, her manner towards him was less marked, and she said, with much of her natural affability and condescension, that she had sent to inquire whether he had observed any thing during the alarm, to give him reason to suppose that any of her attendants were privy to the intrusion.

The answer was satisfactory, and when he mentioned the suspicion which the shadow had suggested, and the circumstance of Chatelard having been probably with Knockwhinnie when Adelaide had visited her Majesty before supper, she eagerly seized him by the hand, and cried,

"You have saved my honour."

This was the feminine impulse of the moment; for she immediately dropped his hand, and retiring a pace or two, desired him to send in Rizzio.

The rank which the Italian held in her household previous

to this time afforded him but few opportunities of addressing her. She knew that he was esteemed a young man of superior talent ; she had often heard the acutest of her counsellors mention this ; but the restricted etiquettes of the court had hitherto kept him at a distance.

She asked him the same questions which she had put to Southennan, and his answers were equally decisive. He mentioned what he had observed of the footsteps in the passage, and that he had conjectured they were those of Chatelard before the alarm was given. While he was stating this, she fixed upon him the fascination as it were of her eye, and inquired if he thought she had been accessory to what had taken place.

Rizzio, with perfect truth, assured her that he had no such suspicion ; that although he had often observed the impassioned ardour with which Chatelard had dared to regard her Majesty, he yet on no one occasion had ever remarked that she evinced any partiality for him. She expressed her satisfaction with the clearness of his recollections, and remembering the opinion she had often heard expressed of his sagacity and intelligence, she inquired in what way he thought she ought to act in the affair. This was a mark of confidence which, however much he longed for, he did not then expect ; but he was ready with his answer, which he delivered with some method, and more than a usual address.

He alluded to her personal condition, to her youth, to the admiration with which she was contemplated, and to the rough and turbulent age in which she was placed, with exquisite delicacy ; comparing her to a fair bark in a turbulent sea, and a bright star amid the clouds of a storm, and concluded with advising her not to interfere beyond the strict necessity of regal duty in Chatelard's affair. "Your Majesty," he concluded, "can only hope for tranquil enjoyment and a happy reign by uniting yourself to some eminent Prince, who will share the cares and the masculine duties of the sovereignty."

All this was so discreetly and so flatteringly delivered, that Mary blamed herself for having known so little of him before, and from that moment she resolved to consider him as one of her confidential advisers.

CHAPTER X.

"Old men and beldames in the streets
Do prophesy upon it dangerously."

SHAKESPEARE.

THE machination of Rizzio had thus succeeded ; but after leaving the Queen's presence he did not feel " his bosom's lord sit lighter on his throne " by the event. It was his first crime : and although his friendship for Chatelard was not of that generous nature which was likely to have awakened much compunction for the double part he had played against him, he yet could not disguise from himself that no honourable heart could approve the craft of his incitements. Conscience acknowledged the guilt.

When he returned into the gallery he found a numerous assemblage of persons there, and that the Council was in deliberation ; but he kept himself aloof, and walked about as if in quest of something that he had lost and could not recover.— He had, indeed, reached a point of fortune from which he might attain renown and power ; but he found it was a headland, and that the prospect beyond it was crossed with black shadows and rugged chasms of many unknown dangers. The road he was to travel was rough, and the region through which it lay ominous with the unblest monuments of many victims.

The mind of Chatelard, at that time, as compared with Rizzio's, was as the mist in the calm to the wreck in the storm. His dread of punishment was soothed with the fallacious imagination that he was beloved by the Queen ; and he stood, in consequence, in the presence of the Council, though perturbed and pale, cheered by this secret persuasion. It were tedious to recapitulate the circumstances of his examination. The fact of his treason in being discovered at an untimely hour in the Queen's bed-chamber, admitted of no extenuation ; nor could the counsellors doubt the intent which had drawn him there.

" My lords," said the Earl of Morton, with his characteristic familiarity, when the examination was finished, " my lords, we shouldna' make twa bites of a cherry. That the hempie was found aneath the Queen's bed is proven ; but that shows no *animus*. Now, unless we can make out what he was doing

there, I canna' see wherein the treason lies ; for surely, as some of your Lordships weel ken, it's no sic a miraculous thing to catch a lad hidden in a young woman's chamber. My word, the fallow has a gude taste. But to speak in a solemn manner, as reverence for the Queen's Majesty requires we should do, I think he might hae been there by an accident. Wha can gain-say that ? Or he might hae been looking for a curiosity, and hearing the Queen and her giggling leddies coming in, might hae crept in aneath the bed out o' sight, to make his escape at a mair convenient season. 'Deed, my lords ! though no man can respect the observance of a strict morality more than I do, yet this is a question that has twa sides, and it behooves us to take care in doing justice that we dinna' offend the Queen. My mind, and I hae had in my day some preeing of human nature and of womankind, is an opinion, that we maybe would best consult discretion if we remitted the whole tot of the concern to be dealt with by her Majesty as in her wisdom and chaastity she may see fit."

At this declaration the Count Dufroy addressed the Chancellor, and informed him of the injunctions he had received from the Queen to deal in this affair with the most rigorous adherence to the law.

"Weel," said Morton, "that changes my opinion. I doubt, Monsieur Chatelard, ye're in a bad way ; for, as ye didna' please her Majesty, we, as ye hae heard, can do naething mair for your gude than to send you to the hangman ; and in the mean while ye'll get every thing to make you comfortable."

The Prior of St. Andrews, who never much relished the gritty humour of the Earl, interposed, and said, that although no question could be raised as to the guilt of the prisoner, it was yet necessary, for the vindication of the Queen's honour, that he should be publicly brought to trial.

"My word, Jamie Stuart," said Morton, "I'll no say that thou's like the tod's whelp 'a day alder a day waur ;' but as the moon wanes thy wit waxes, and though we may be fashed wi' a trial, yet I agree that, for fashion's cause, we canna well put the varlet out of pain without the benefit of an advocate as well as an executioner ; and therefore I move that he be sent to trial according to law."

The prisoner was then removed again to the strong-room, and the Council rising, passed into the gallery, where there was a great bustle in consequence of the Provost and the Town Council coming to address her Majesty on her escape from what they denominated "a rampant traitor."

"My Lord Provost," said the Earl of Morton jocularly, "ye should hae been sure, before ye came wi' your comforting condolence, that it will be acceptable; for what if it were a disappointment rather than an escape?"

Both the Prior of St. Andrew's and the Count were vexed to hear the Earl indulging his characteristic disregard of decorum, and begged him not to treat it so lightly.

"For," said the Prior, "it is a serious business, whatever may have been the incident; and the life of a young man, hitherto unblameable, will probably be forfeited."

The Queen having, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, consented to receive the address, the gallery was soon thinned, and only Southennan and Rizzio were left in it. Something had all the evening dissatisfied Southennan with the conduct of Rizzio, and he felt shocked when the Italian said heartlessly,

"It is an ill wind that blows nobody good. By this rashness of Chatelard the road is open to you with Adelaide."

Southennan, though this had occurred to himself, and had even subdued, in some degree, his regret for the fate which the Frenchman had brought upon himself, was yet not pleased to hear it so familiarly uttered, and replied sarcastically,

"It certainly seems to give you pleasure also; more than I can account for, or easily comprehend."

Rizzio perceived that he had gone farther than the sympathy of Southennan would follow, and he was too deeply read in the mystery of man to indulge his exultation more openly. Accordingly, to avoid farther observation, he soon after retired for the night: our hero also proceeded home.

On issuing from the portal of the Palace, Southennan found a vast miscellaneous multitude assembled, discussing the affair with all those customary exaggerations which belong, as matters of course, to the accidents and indiscretions of princes. But he did not linger to set any of them right; for the state of excitement in which he had been held for so many hours had exhausted his strength.

The dawn was just then beginning to brighten over "the east neuk of Fife," and to shed its silvery twilight on the pinnacles and chimney-tops of the city, but the stillness of the morning was banished. The whole town was astir; men in arms were parading in all directions; the wynds were guarded; and the fearful din of warlike preparation rung around, as if the walls were actually beleaguered. A trumpet sounded at intervals wildly from the castle, drums were beating in the hollows of the Grassmarket and the Cowgate. The surrounding

country was roused. Horsemen came galloping in, followed by numerous bands of cotters and farmers, armed with such weapons as they could reach or snatch in their haste. Nor was the alarm confined to those who girded themselves for battle. When the press of patriots, who thronged the gates and filled the streets, began to slacken, carles of more forethought were seen approaching, seated on carts and wains loaded with provisions; and long trains of pack-horses, laden with sacks of meal, driven by boys, displayed the national sagacity in turning all accidents to profitable account; these were soon after followed by coveys of country wives and lasses, with creels on their arms: circumstances which, while all around menaced tumult, indicated a general persuasion that it would come to no head. The universal scene was not unlike a multitudinous fair. Nor did the influx and commotion soon cease, for the tidings of the Queen's danger spread far and wide, insomuch that those who came first into the city could hardly find room to repass the gates, against the crowd that was streaming in. The alarm was interesting to others besides the populace. The Reformers and the Catholics heard it with equal consternation, and from all quarters hastened to the scene. The Protestants came flocking like doves to the windows, and the Papists like crows and ravens to the new-turned fields, where they had of old been accustomed to pillage.

CHAPTER XI.

"The dream's here still; even when I wake, 'tis
Without me as within me; not imagined, felt."

CYMBELINE.

WHEN Knockwhinnie heard what had happened to Chatelard, he came to consult with our hero. He was disappointed by the discovery of the true object of Chatelard's affections; it made him feel a degree of resentment at what he regarded as a deception; but he still recollected with gratitude the debt he owed him for having procured his pardon; and the object of his visit was to ask Southennan to accompany him to the place where the unfortunate Frenchman was confined.

"Though," said Knockwhinnie, "I am not content with

him for having so openly and ardently professed an attachment for my daughter, yet in return for the obligations he has laid me under, it is my duty to endeavour by all imaginable means, consistent with integrity, to mitigate his afflictions."

Southennan readily acquiesced in his request, and they proceeded down to the Palace, where they were informed that Chatelard had been removed to the Castle.

Adelaide was ill, and could not be seen. Her father, however, requested that she would allow him to see her, and he was admitted. He had expected to find her afflicted with grief, and her disease only agitation; but, on walking into the room, he was surprised to see her sitting alone, and that she took no notice of his entrance. He spoke to her, first chidingly, for yielding to such extreme grief, and then tenderly exhorted her to make an effort to regain her tranquillity. But she heeded not what he said, and he became alarmed at the vacuity of her eyes and the paleness of her countenance. It was manifest that her mind was overwhelmed by one dreadful idea, and that she was in no condition to be left alone.

"This is too much," said he; "It can neither be justified nor indulged, that you should abandon yourself to such sorrow."

Her answer showed the fearful idea with which she was possessed.

"He will be executed! the Queen will not interfere!"

"Of what avail, then, is grief?" replied her father. "The better part for you is to remain quiet; it is also the more comely. How hopeless your regard for him has ever been!"

Without seeming in any degree moved, and still sitting with the same steadfast and pale vacant countenance, she said,

"He will be executed! the Queen will not interfere!"

"You heed me not!" exclaimed her father, tenderly taking her by the hand. "Why do you but repeat these words? I beseech you Adelaide, to answer me, and not to sit with that mournful look."

"He will be executed? the Queen will not interfere!"

This repetition deeply affected Knockwhinnie: he chafed her hand, and otherwise endeavouring to rouse her, called her earnestly by name as if she had been asleep; but her catalepsy was too intense to be disturbed by his endeavours. He summoned assistance, and searched for essences, or any of the other means by which sensibility is usually recalled; but neither his fears nor his cares excited her attention. She sat in the same attitude, her hand resting on her knee as he left it: her eyes continued in the same glassy stare, and void of specu-

lation. Her attendant, who had quitted the apartment when she had admitted him, returned, and, on seeing her condition, screamed, and flew upon her in a state of distraction, fearing she was dead. All produced no effect ; for, even while Annette, her maid, was weeping and lamenting over her, she said, with the same appalling and corpse-like calm,

"He will be executed ! the Queen will not interfere !"

"What does she mean by repeating these words ?"

"They are those," replied Annette, "of the Lady Mary Livingstone, when she told her that Chatelard was removed to the Castle."

The mention of his name seemed to produce some impression on Adelaide ; for she turned her head round, and looked as if her consciousness were reviving. Her father, on seeing this, stood eagerly watching her recovery ; and Annette, with folded hands, also stood looking with terror in her face, as if she too watched some inconceivable change.

"The bell is tolling and the crowd gathering !" said Adelaide.

A slight hectic glow shone for a moment on her alabaster cheek ; and the colour, which began to return to her lips, continued to deepen to the natural coral ; her eyes, however, were still motionless :

"Who is that sallow gaunt wretch, whose lean arms are bared to the shoulders ?"

"What does she mean ?"

"She is thinking of the executioner," replied Annette.

"Hush ! she speaks again !"

"They are coming ! That felon-looking wretch carries his axe as proudly as a truncheon of honour. Their heads are rising ! now they have come up upon the scaffold ! they move a part ! Oh, Chatelard !" she exclaimed, with a violent shriek, and, starting from her chair, seemed like one that had awakened from the incantations of the night-mare.

"My child ! my child !" cried her father, embracing her.

Without, however, appearing to be sensible of his presence, she said,

"Where have I been ? Was I asleep, and but dreamed ? Oh ! such perfect visions come not in sleep." And, tears rushing into her eyes, she wept for some time, gradually recovering. Still, without noticing her father, she said,

"Annette, why put I on this mantle ? Where did I intend to go ?" And, with a momentary glare of wildness, she suddenly turned to her father, and exclaimed,

"Were you not speaking, sir? Did you not chide me?"

"Alas, my pretty Adelaide, I had not then observed thy condition! But compose thyself."

"I begin to have some recollection," said she, in a strange hollow voice, "that Mary Livingstone came to me, and said that Chatelard was taken to the Castle. Did she not say, 'He will be executed, and the Queen will not interfere?' She did say that. But where is she?—and how are you here, my father?—and Annette, what would you, that you stand gazing, as if there were something fearful upon me?"

At this crisis, the Lady Mary Livingstone entered from another apartment, followed by the physician of the palace; and by his orders Knockwhinnie went into the adjoining room, accompanied by the Lady Mary, from whom he learned, that just before he had been admitted, and while she was telling her of the Queen's inexorable determination, Adelaide suddenly fell into that frightful syncope.

The physician presently joined them, and assured Knockwhinnie that quiet and repose would soon restore his daughter.

"It is but a womanly infirmity that has overtaken her; and with the help of a little sleep, she will soon be well again. There is no medicament more salutary in such a case."—

Southennan, in the mean time, had met the Count in the gallery, coming from the Queen, with an appearance of satisfaction so obvious, that he could not but inquire the cause of his apparent enjoyment.

"Her Majesty," replied Dufroy, "surprises me. With all the vacillations of her sex, she is this morning more firm in her purpose than I have ever seen her before; for, spite of the struggle between her mercy, or it may be regard for Chatelard, and her dignity, she is still resolute to let the law take its course."

"Then," said Southennan, "you will suspend your return to France?"

"Yes, but not altogether of my own resolution; for she has commanded me to remain, upon a promise that I made to her uncles, the princes of Lorrain, to continue with her, until she should select a suitable husband and protector. Although my task here ill accords with my inclinations, yet I cannot forget the solemnity of my promise, so long as I can do any service not inconsistent with my honour. I do not think now that she entertains any affection for the rash young man, or was privy to his criminal folly. Had she been so, I would have taken my departure by the same vessel this day in which he was to

have sailed ; but now I will continue yet awhile, and particularly as she has for the first time intimated her intention of choosing a husband. It is needful ; and there is wisdom in the suggestion occurring to her at this time. Moreover, she has raised Rizzio, not only to fill the place of Chatelard in the Chancery, but to manage the correspondence with the princes of Europe, regarding her intention to marry ; a trust of great delicacy, which could not be in abler hands. I would it were in honestier !”

“ If you doubt his honesty, my Lord Count, why have you approved of the appointment ?”

“ I do not mean honesty, as it is spoken of by traders and burghers ; but of that sort which does not too eagerly look for advantages to its possessor. In sooth, I think Rizzio is one who will, in choosing a husband for the Queen, choose also a patron for himself ; and by that she may suffer.”

“ If you think so, why, permit me to say again, have you not told the Queen this ?”

“ I have,” said the Count ; “ but she is wilful ; and I am too happy to find her so well inclined to vindicate herself and dignity, in this affair of Chatelard ; so that I postponed my stronger remonstrance until some more convenient season.”

CHAPTER XII.

“ He jests at scars who never felt a wound !”

ROMEO AND JULIET.

SOUTHENNAN and Knockwhinnie having obtained an order to admit them to Chatelard, left the Palace together, and proceeded up towards the Castle. As they were walking along, Southennan, without acquainting his companion that he knew where Auchenbrae was secreted, inquired if he still cherished his anger against him.

“ Knockwhinnie,” said he, “ now you have happily obtained your own pardon, it were as well to think no more of the injuries which you have suffered, but to allow the wounds of your mind to heal.”

“ It is easy for you to say so : it is easy for those who never knew danger or difficulty to give brave advice ; it is easy for

those who have not felt misfortune themselves, to descant on the faults of the unhappy. I grant that I was rash in my revenge on Count Dufroy ; but neither in principle nor motive was it unjust ; and therefore, though he was innocent, and I repent my rashness towards him yet the guilt which provoked my dagger deserved the punishment I intended. My conscience will not be satisfied, if justice be not done !”

Southennan was too much under the influence of the spirit of the age to be sensible to the peril of that doctrine. His own nature, frank and generous, was not likely to be instigated by fierce feelings, even under a sense of injury ; but he considered not with sufficient antipathy the license which was too generally assumed by injured individuals, personally to redress their own wrongs. He was, in consequence, not apt to controvert the notions of Knockwhinnie either eagerly or with much force ; he only observed in reply—

“The revival of old grudges seldom does any good ; the guilt of Auchenbrae was much similar to your own attempt on the Count, in the wrong he did your house ; it was not successful, and as you have obtained your pardon because your own intention had not been accomplished, for the same reason you should consider whether you ought not, in your turn, to pardon him.”

“The cases are not parallel ; his injury to me and mine was dictated by his own profligacy : I had never given him any cause to justify the wrong he did. In him it was pure wickedness ; my attempt on the Count was as guiltless as an accident ; I believed him to have committed the injuries that have blasted my life, but as he was innocent of them I could have no reason in doing what I did. When the truth was known the Count was changed in my thoughts from a debtor to a creditor. I owed him for the harm I had done him, as it were, in mistake.”

“Then you are still determined to avenge the wrong you have suffered by Auchenbrae ?”

“I do not say,” replied Knockwhinnie, “that I will in his case take the law into my own hands, because he has long been addicted to habits and practices that have cut him off from the fellowship of gentlemen. Moreover, I have consulted my kinsman, Lord Killiecrankie, of the Court of Session, and he is of opinion that I would unworthily demean myself were I to take the punishment upon myself ; and, moreover, he also says, if I prosecute him in the Court, I would have great difficulty in maintaining my case for lack of sufficient evidence ; and that,

VOL. II.—5

as his Lordship said, is the only reason which could justify me in taking upon myself to make good what the law cannot reach."

Southennan was perplexed at hearing this, and observed—

"What would he say if you killed Auchenbrae, and were brought before his Lordship for murder?"

"Really," replied Knockwhinnie, "that is a point of law which neither of us thought of!"

As they were thus talking, and occasionally stopping to recover their breath, exhausted in climbing the steep ascent between the Netherbow and the Castle, Johnnie Gaff, who had observed them together, followed at a respectful distance along the side of the street, plainly indicating by his frequent glances at Knockwhinnie, a desire to be noticed by his old master.

Johnnie was an altered man; he had lost, by his dismissal from the halberdiers, not only his uniform but much of his self-consequence. This was the more severely felt, as the streets were thronged with crowds of armed rustics whom the alarm had brought in from the country, among whom Johnnie felt his habitual desire to vindicate authority again revived. He was also a good deal annoyed by idle children, who, recognising him in his more homely apparel, sometimes, to show the natural satisfaction of humanity at the sight of fallen greatness, pushed him about, and treated him with all the derision so generally rendered to misfortune.

At last Johnnie caught the eye of Knockwhinnie; before whom, cap-in-hand, he immediately presented himself. At first, in his altered garb he was not recognized, but he soon took care to be so.

"It's true, Knockwhinnie," said he, "that the *only probandy* lies on me to convince you that I am John Gaff, umquhile clerk to Mathew Symington, heretofore your Baron Bailie."

"Ah!" exclaimed Knockwhinnie, "I am glad to see you."

"Thank you, Knockwhinnie; and if I can be o' any service now that I'm out o' bread I'm willing, *siny mory*."

Knockwhinnie was at the time in want of a servant, and the idea occurred to him that Johnnie might be useful. He laughed, however, at the offer, and said—

"I see, Johnnie that what is bred in the bone is not easily got out of the flesh: you are as modest as ever. After seizing me by the neck with so little reverence, how can you think that I should endure you in my service again?"

"Na, Knockwhinnie, that ought to be a reason for taking me: it's an *argumentum ad hominy*; for I but did my duty to

the Lord Provost and the Queen, and it's as gude as a written testificate, that I'm likely to be as trusty in the servitude o' ither folk. I was in the lawful exercise of my calling and jurisdiction; and for that, Knockwhinnie, ye should treat with me on the *state of anty Bell*."

"Well, Johnnie, come to the Unicorn after dinner, and we shall have a negociation."

"But," replied Johnnie, "I see ye're on some intent o' business. Now, as I'm weel acquaint wi' the *locus loci* of ilk wynd and closs; indeed, I may say, I ken *totas et integras* every hole and corner o' the burgh o' Embro; couldna ye find a bit turn for me to do afore the afternoon?"

Knockwhinnie laughed, and replied,

"All I have to do, I must do myself!"

Southernan here suggested that as Johnnie had held so recently an official appointment, he might be serviceable in conducting them through the Castle to the tower in which Chate-lard was confined; and the suggestion being adopted, Johnnie was directed to follow them.

It would have been instructive to the student of mankind to have seen the immediate effect which the acceptance of Johnnie's services produced on him. The shy and diffident air with which, though affecting freedom, he had addressed himself to his quondam master, instantly disappeared; and he only seemed in want of his halberd, to be as dignified as ever. Indeed it was a great lack to be then without, for as he erected himself into official importance, his hands and arms were awkwardly cumbersome: a switch would at that time have improved his stiff graces. However, he drew confidence from his vocation; and did not, as they walked to the Castle-hill, fail to give a glowing impression of his palm on the cheek of more than one of the urchins who held out their fingers as he passed, and molested him with their murgeons.

At the Castle-gate, Johnnie showed that he knew how to set about his business, by telling his master and Southernan to wait at the draw-bridge, while he went in to ascertain from the sentries if admission would be allowed; greatly, however, to Johnnie's discomfiture, he was gruffly told to go about his business, for nobody could be admitted without an order.

"I'm very sorry," said he, as he came out, "that ye hae climbed the hill to sae little purpose. Had I no been *functy offeshy*, I could hae ta'en you in without a *mandamus*."

"We have one," replied Knockwhinnie; "and here it is!"

"Then, *instanty perit* a' difficulty." On saying which,

Johnnie took the paper, and proudly leading the van, showed it with an air to the soldier ; and, without condescending to exchange a word, proceeded up the ascent to the next gate, which he passed with equal silence and ceremony. On reaching the higher court, where a number of the garrison were playing at penny stanes, Johnnie procured a soldier to conduct them to Chatelard's prison, where they had not long to remain, until an old man came with the keys.

The jailor had been, in his better days, of great athletic power : age had diminished both the quantity and the articulation of his flesh and muscles : but his joints were gnarled and unusually large, and his hands huge, and roped with veins and sinews, even to a degree that still implied the possession of Herculean strength. He stooped beneath the burden of age ; his hoary head was uncovered ; and though his office was stern, there was yet no sullenness in his countenance ; on the contrary, his eyes were lively, and his look cheerful, even facetious. He came leaning on a staff, and carried in his hand three or four large rusty keys ; one of which he applied to the lock, and admitted the visitors.

CHAPTER XIII.

—————"I see men's judgments are
A parcel of their fortunes : and things outward
Do draw the inward quality after them
To suffer all alike."

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA.

THE full danger of his situation did not occur to the apprehension of Chatelard, until he was conducted from the Palace to the Castle ; for although, when he was first discovered, his consternation was great and visible, it did not last long. His vanity suggested that the Queen would soon relent ; and with this imaginary assurance he comforted himself till he was brought before the Council : even there hope did not desert him ; and he thought that the rough humour of the Earl of Morton was not an omen to be dreaded. After his removal from the Council the flattery continued ; and he was no otherwise treated while he remained under custody in Holyrood House than as usual, with the exception of the guards in the

room with him. But in the morning, when he was informed that a litter was in waiting, in which he was to be conveyed to the Castle, the cold touch of fear made him shudder. Still it was observed, that although he was slightly agitated as he mounted the litter, he yet showed no pusillanimity of terror of punishment. But when, as he was carried up the street, he beheld the vast multitude rolling on all sides like the waves of the sea, and saw the universal alarm in every countenance, he became sad and spiritless. He was then convinced of the extent of public disaster which his folly involved, and that he was passing from beyond the reach of his imaginary influence with the Queen.

On arriving at the Castle Hill, he beheld a number of the garrison drawn out, and a great crowd assembled; the soldiers, as the litter moved towards the gate, formed a circle round it to keep off the people; it halted at the draw-bridge, on which he alighted, and he was conducted by the troops across. The instant he was within the portal, the bridge was raised and the portcullis dropped, with a clang which sounded in his ears more awful than thunder. He felt as if the gates of life were shut upon him, and his agitation became so great, that he was obliged to lean on the arm of the officer who conducted him to the traitor's room. From a sentiment of compassion, the officer offered to remain with him; but he declined the civility, and begged, with a husky throat, that he would send him a draught of water. In this he was indulged; and the officer, after an ineffectual attempt to cheer him, left him with his despair.

For some time he remained immovable: the noise of the agitated city rung in his ears like the voice of the ocean in a storm: sometimes it seemed to subside, and to sink as if tranquillity were spreading; but ever and anon it rose with a terrible burst, as if the confusion of cataracts and earthquakes was raging around. But the tension of the indescribable feeling from which he so suffered was too excessive to afflict him long, and he became sensible that his condition was not to be lightened by yielding to unmanly alarms; accordingly, he made an effort to rouse himself, and it was not unsuccessful.

The apartment in which he was confined was appropriated exclusively to state prisoners; it was in one of the highest towers, and was lighted by a grated window, which looked towards the west. No part of the town could be seen from it, but in other respects the view was extensive and cheerful.

The apartment itself was not uncomfortable: three tall

narrow-backed chairs stood at one side ; a large settle or wooden settee, occupied a space opposite ; and the bed was in a niche ; a table, ponderous and massy, occupied the middle of the room ; and a huge carved oaken chest, with brazen hinges, and a vast brazen lock, stood under the window.

When he had looked abroad upon the western landscape, his mind received, from its brightness and tranquillity, a sympathetic sentiment of clearness and calm. He had been unable, during the whole night previous, although in comparative self-possession, to collect his thoughts. The tablets of his memory were disordered and broken ; he had a vivid remembrance of every thing which had taken place, but could not arrange them, either in the order of time, or connect them easily with minor circumstances.

The chaos of his thoughts, in the transit from the Palace to the Castle, admitted of no order ; they were feelings something more like corporeal pains and pangs than mental recollections. But as he became more composed the storm abated, and the wreck of his thoughts drifted with less and less violence.

On retiring from the window he threw his eyes round the room, and saw on several parts of the panels names and inscriptions, the memorials of former prisoners. Some of the names he had heard of, and that those who possessed them had all perished on the scaffold. The inscriptions were equally dismal : they expressed regrets and sorrow, and complained of unfaithful friends.

The recollection of the advice he had received from Rizzo, and which in the delusion of hope and vanity he had adopted, flashed upon him, and the peril into which he had in consequence fallen seemed strikingly in accordance with the result predicted to those who did not attend to the admonitions in the inscriptions. The suspicion of the Italian's integrity being once awakened, his memory ran over innumerable records, unconsciously placed among her archives, which ought, had they been rightly heeded, to have preserved him from following his subtle and insidious advice.

"He will thrive," exclaimed Chatelard, "by my ruin. Had he not set me on, I never should have dared to risk myself until I had received some plainer proof that the Queen was willing to accept my love ; but I was infatuated, else I should have seen how craftily he had paved the way by which I have been brought here."

In thus blaming his own weakness in yielding to advice that

bore in its very object a certainty of great danger, he could not refrain from uttering with vehemence threats of vengeance against his perfidious friend. But in his passion he forgot his own condition ; and when the recollection of it returned upon him, he was overwhelmed with a horror darker and wilder than all he had yet suffered.

The humiliation of being deprived of the means of revenge was in itself dreadful. He felt as a man enraged, whose hands have been smitten with paralysis ; his ineffectual indignation was as the storming of a child against the stone that has hurt it ; and he was seized with a fit of convulsive laughter at the mere imagination of throwing the javelin, his arm more incapable by his fetters than had it been withered by old age.

It was during this paroxysm that he heard the key turned in the lock to admit Southennan and Knockwhinnie. The sound roused him from the aimless rage of his despair, and he prepared himself to receive whoever the visitors might be, with at least some outward show of equanimity. But no effort of resolution could prevent them from discovering that he had undergone, since the preceding evening, a dismal and appalling change. His complexion was faded into an ashy wanness ; his eyes were sunken, and his cheeks hollow ; his hair was matted and oily, with the sweat of felonious agitation ; he looked many years older ; and there was a premature cast of the cadavre in his countenance, that rendered his appearance almost terrible. He, however, received them with a hysterical cheerfulness. Knockwhinnie, instead of answering his expressions of joy, looked at Southennan, who, not less distressed, sat down unbidden, and said to himself,

“ I was not prepared for this. Pardon me Chatelard ; but I had not imagined it possible, that in so few hours you could have been so altered ! ”

Chatelard endeavoured to laugh, but it was more like a hideous rattle than the expression of any cheerful feeling, as he said—

“ True ; I have not had time to make my toilet : and I assure you, that the toil of a traitor's thoughts is as hard as a soldier's in battle.”

Knockwhinnie by this time had also taken a seat, but he was still so grieved and amazed that he could find no terms to express what he felt. Each, however, soon became sensible that the indulgence of dejection was not becoming to the occasion, and they severally rallied themselves into a more masculine mood.

CHAPTER XIV.

"For neither man nor angel can discern
Hypocrisy ; the only evil that walks
Invisible, except to God alone."

MILTON.

THE state of Rizzio's mind was in the mean time not enviable. In advising Chatelard to that boldness which had precipitated his fate, the Italian had never imagined his rashness would carry him to such an extremity as to violate the sanctuary of the Queen's chamber. He had only anticipated some indiscretion which would have the effect of removing him from her Majesty's service ; but when he witnessed the public consternation which the discovery had produced, he perceived that the consequences could not be calculated, and it filled him with anxiety and dread. He was as the simpleton in the forest, who for some petty personal advantage, throws a firebrand into a brake, and beholds in consequence a hurricane of flames rising, and raging to a general conflagration of the woods.

But he had so conducted himself, from the time that Chatelard was ordered to quit the kingdom, as to avert all suspicion of having abetted him in his purpose ; still his astonishment at the disastrous result was not greater than his grief ; for the indignation of the Queen, the severe determination of the Council, and, above all, the tumultuous and universal rage of the people, rendered an ignominious doom inevitable. There was, indeed, no affectation of sorrow in the pity of Rizzio ; on the contrary, it was sharpened with contrition ; for he could not hide from himself, that his advice had doubtless ministered to the ruin by which Chatelard was overtaken. Ambition was in Rizzio his strongest energy, but he possessed many of the generous qualities which are usually found in connexion with that gorgeous passion. These induced him to attempt the almost hopeless task of appeasing the anger of the household, and particularly to address himself to such members of the Privy Council with whom he had acquired the privilege of expressing any opinion.

His first endeavour was with the Prior of St. Andrews ; for, instructed by his innate discernment of character, he rightly considered, that although the object of his suit was merciful, it was yet one on which the Queen could not be addressed, even by her ladies ; while it was precisely, in all its bearings, a case wherein the interference of the Prior could be most becomingly exercised.

Accordingly, without seeking an opportunity, he availed himself of the first afforded to speak on the subject : it took place much about the time that Knockwhinnie and Southennan were with the prisoner. The Prior had come to pay his morning respects to her Majesty, and until she was ready to receive him, he happened, without any particular motive, to go into the room where Rizzio was already preparing despatches to the different ministers abroad, to intimate to the respective courts at which they were stationed, her Majesty's intention of again entertaining proposals of marriage.

Rizzio mentioned to him the purport of the letters, and then with his wonted dexterity, alluded to the folly of Chatelard, applying to it, with equal skill and address, the softest epithets he could select, in order insensibly to soften the indignation it had inspired into some more lenient feeling.

"But for the consequences to the unfortunate man himself," said the Italian, "none can regret the indecorum of his rashness, since it has been the means of bringing her Majesty to this resolution, so greatly desired by all her servants and subjects. I only regret that the rigour of the Scottish laws may require a sacrifice disproportioned to the extent of Chatelard's guilt. It will be a bad omen, if the nuptials must be celebrated with blood."

"Heaven forfend it," replied the Prior, "but the fate of the traitor will be consummated long enough before any match can be agreed on."

"I hope," said Rizzio, "though his rashness cannot be pardoned, it is not of so deep a dye as treason, and that death will not follow of necessity. No ill has resulted from it, but to poor Chatelard himself. It is but a thin partition which divides unfulfilled intention from innocence."

"You are too subtle, Rizzio, it is not wholesome to morality to draw such fine conclusions : for it is the will that makes the guilt of a purpose ; and a frustrated intent loses none of its sinfulness by having been frustrated."

"I have neither skill nor casuistry enough," replied Rizzio, "to debate with my Lord Prior ; but perhaps, before Chate-

lard was discovered, he may have rued his indiscretion ; and does not such repentance redeem innocence ?”

“ You speak of him,” said the Prior, “ with more temperance than may be done unblamed.”

“ In truth, my Lord, I cannot else but lament the jeopardy into which he has fallen. He is possessed of many talents, and, save in this most perilous misfortune, was singularly unblemished. His unremitted study, until the constraint of destiny brought him, ill fated, to Scotland, was to improve those gifts with which Heaven had been pleased to endow him so richly ; and, but for this woful infatuation, he was one that would have proved himself an ornament to mankind. I hope it is no fault that I lament the temerity of his fond passion. Alas ! it does seem hard that too ardent love should be sin against loyalty. What more than the doom it is said he must suffer could have been his fate, had he meditated the use of the traitor’s dagger on the Queen’s life ?—yea, had he, with the rancour of real treason, actually plunged it into her bosom ? Ah, my Lord ! look on his frailty as it is seen by Nature ; and, for a time, forget the artificial guilt which the law in its austerity hath invented to gratify the prejudices of society. He has been betrayed by love ; and is not love the life of society—the very element and essence of the prime duty of man ? It may be that the tears of sorrowful friendship make me blind ; but neither guilt nor sin can I discern in Chatelard’s misdemeanour, but only more of virtue than stands within the approbation of the narrow and un pitying law.”

“ It were wise of you, Rizzio, not to speak after this manner to the Earl of Morton, and wiser if you did not speak at all ; for it stands not within the possibility of duty to herself, or to her dignity, that the Queen’s mercy can reach Chatelard.”

At this point of their conversation, the Prior was summoned to attend her Majesty, and the Italian left to ruminate on the failure of his mediation. He was not, however, disheartened : disappointment proved often to him a goad to endeavour ; and in this case it was particularly so. He was not only incited to perseverance by regret for the fearful situation in which the victim of his advice stood, but also by something like pique at his ingenuity proving so abortive ; for, like many others of that period, he was deceived, by the general gentleness of the Prior’s manners, into a belief that he possessed less stability of principle than he afterward manifested ; and in consequence he was led to presume that he might influence him by a course of argument relative to principles seldom applicable to the

controversies of courtiers, with whom the right, and the abstract merit of necessity, always give way to the expedient. But his management was different with the Earl of Morton, who shortly after entered his room, and whose coarser character required a more worldly treatment. He accordingly set roundly to work with him ; for the familiar and jocose habits of the Earl encouraged him to take that liberty. But Morton, like many who freely indulge themselves in jocularities with others, did not much like to be the object of it from them in return ; and thus it happened, that although none of the Privy Council had formed a more correct estimate of the talents and character of Rizzio, few of them had so great a distaste to him, arising entirely from the presumption with which he appeared, in conversation, to rank himself as an equal.

CHAPTER XV.

"There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will."

SHAKESPEARE.

"WEEL, Dauvit!" said the Earl of Morton to Rizzio, after some general prelude touching the matter, "What think ye will be the upshot of this straemash? The Frenchman, puir chield! I doot, is past redemption; for I hae been discoursing with that bardy scoot, the Leddy Mall Livingstone; and if she would hae gi'en me the minimumest inkling that the Queen's Majesty had been either by hook or crook privy to the fallow's darning himself aneath the bed, I would hae stood up for him in the face and teeth o' the boldest at the Council-Board; for it's awfu' to think o' putting a spirity lad's head in a tow for falling in love wi' a bonny young wanton widow."

"That's said like yourself, my Lord," replied Rizzio. "Not one of all the Council have a right conception of the case."

"Foggies! exclaimed Morton; "Where could they get it? There's no' ane among them, Dauvit, that has as meikle daft blood in his tail as a sybow, tho' they dinna want smeddum to make the e'en water, whether it be a case o' guilt or innocence. But I'm mair provoked at Prior Jamie than any

other ; for he's a douce young man, and it's weel kent that chields of that sort are Solomons amang the lasses. In sooth, Dauvit, it does not consort with my conceit of state wisdom to look overly curious aneath the Queen's bed or blankets. Puir forlorn young widow ! it's no' decent to make such a hobble-show ; for after a', she may have been really diverting hersel'."

"Your Lordship," replied Rizzio, "takes a plain and honest view of the matter. You see it with the spectacles of experience. Justice surely would be satisfied, were Chatelard sent out of the kingdom."

"That's sensible, Dauvit. Really thou's a clever deevil—I'll aye say that o' thee. But the Queen hersel' is the worst of a'. It's an unco' thing to hear o' folk so fond o' blood : nae doubt it comes of Papistry ; for when I was in that delusion, Gude forgie me ! I had a kind of heartfelt satisfaction in seeing a head chappit aff, especially when the axe was blunt, and the job was hagglet : it gart me grind my teeth with a feeling like fainness."

"Your Lordship could not better show the mercifulness of your reformed nature than by your compassion for Chatelard. I grieve to think his case is so hopeless. Perhaps, however, when the trial is over, your interposition then may be more effectual."

"But what fashes me most about it," replied the Earl, "is the marvelling it may breed abroad. We'll just be laughed at for being o' sic a maidenly morality."

"It may deter the princes"—

"Pa, pa ! Dauvit, gie thysel' nae concern about them. What cares a kiesor o' Almaine, or an Italian hircos, about sic a stale commodity as chastity ? It would ne'er hae been a mot in the Queen's marriage wi' the best o' them, had Chatelard been catched cuddling in her bosom. But, Dauvit, I redde ye tak' tent what ye do anent this matter o' the marriage ; for we'll no allow our heifer to mell wi' far aff cattle. Scotland's no to become a pendicle to another kingdom. So ye'll ne'er let wot to the Imperator, nor to Philip o' Spain, that the Queen's a wanter ; but fin' out some canny princie, in straightened circumstances, that will be thankful for his promotion, and biddable to the barons and 'states o' the realm."

With this advice the Earl retired to attend her Majesty in the Council Chamber, where Rizzio soon after presented himself with the drafts of the letters he had been directed to

prepare, and received not only the Queen's commendations for the elegance of the diction, but also the applause of more than one of the counsellors for being a fairer writer than his predecessor.

"It behooves us now," said the Earl of Morton, "to consider to what courts the letters should be sent; for it's my notion, please your Majesty, that the dignity of this your ancient realm will be best maintained by waling your gudeman frae out the lesser princes of Christendom: for it was a great fear among us a', that had your Majesty been graciously pleased to bear a bairn to the French king, Scotland might have become a commodity to France, and been dragged through nae better than dirt and defamation until her royalty was utterly destroyed."

In this patriotic sentiment the whole Council concurred; and the Queen assured them that she would leave the choice entirely to them, for she had no doubt they would see well to the weal of the state; and she added, with a smile to the Earl of Morton, that she trusted her personal happiness would not be forgotten.

"Your Majesty," said the Earl, "need gie yoursel' nae concern about that; for as it's no' a king we hae to look for, but only a solacium for your widowhood, our first duty will be to please you; and, therefore, I trust my noble friends here will no be overly scrupulous anent the talents of the prince, but look to the parts of the man. Indeed, clever princes, which, thanks be praise! are no' common, hae seldom been a convenience in Scotland; and as we are content with your Majesty's great power and capacity for ruling a camstairie people, we'll make choice o' a weel faur't man o' a moderate capacity."

When this part of the deliberation was over, her Majesty retired, and the Council proceeded to issue the necessary orders for the trial of Chatelard, and they were carried into effect next day; for, as Lord Morton said,

"Since ye will put him to death, there's Christianity in putting him out o' pain wi' a' reasonable expedition."

After this the Council broke up, and Morton who was never perfectly satisfied of the Queen's entire innocence, resolved to visit the prisoner; accordingly, on leaving the Palace, he proceeded straight to the Castle, and was admitted to Chatelard while Southennan and Knockwlinnie were still with him.

"Gentlemen," said he to them as he entered, "I maun beg you to let me be alone wi' this puir lad. His time's fast coming,

for the morn is set for his trial, and maybe he would be mair the waur o' making a bit shrift to me before appearing at the bar. I hope I'm breaking in on nae more interesting business."

In this short address there was somewhat more of gravity than in the Earl's usual manner; for he really thought that the affair was magnified beyond the guilt of it.

Knockwhinnie and Southbennan accordingly left the prisoner, promising to see him again, and encouraging him to keep up his spirits: for since a trial had been granted, there was still a chance of some mitigation of the penalty he had incurred.

As soon as they were out of the room, the Earl said—

It's but a fule's counsel, my man, that they hae gi'en you; ye hae nae better ground o' hope than that ye hae to deal wi' a weathercock-woman; though, to do her justice in this matter, she's doore enough. However, sit down beside me, and tell me truly a' the outs and ins o' your exploit: for save that crooked spirit, Davvit, I dinna' think ye hae a true friend beside myself."

"I fear," replied Chatelard, "that I can count but little on the friendship of Rizzio."

"Ay, man; what reason hae ye for saying sae? for really, though I dinna' think him a' thegither a creature o' perfect sincerity, I'm sure he has a warm side to you, and nae man could make lighter o' your offence, or plead stronger for indulgence to you than he did to me this morning. What can be the thought that makes you suspect his truth?"

"Because, had he not incited me to obtrude upon the Queen, it would never have entered my imagination."

"Oh, the scoun'rel! Did he do that? My word, it was a supple trick; for by it he has whisked you to the wuddy, and himsel' into your office. Howsoever, just be plain with me, Monsieur, and I'll no slacken in my endeavour for your behoof. Tell me truly, had ye any encouragement frae the Queen's Majesty to do what ye did?"

"Not by word, certainly."

"Na," replied the Earl, "she's o'er cunning a hen to speak; that would be Lathron-like: but she has, nae doubt, smiled upon you, and touched your tae wi' her foot, and wi' other sweet and secret blandishments gi'en you an understanding that wasna' kittle to read."

Chatelard made no reply to this, but shook his head.

"Weel," said the Earl, "this is a knotty case: ye're really

a venturesome gamester to run sic a risk without a blink o' favour."

"It was the dream and delusion of passion : I was spell bound, and driven to it by an irresistible impulse."

"Didna' ye say, just now, that ye were eggit on by Dauvit, and now ye lay the wyte on your stars."

A good deal more conversation ensued, but it all ended in proving that Chatelard had weakly yielded too much, and gone too far on Rizzio's advice, while it confirmed—if confirmation had been necessary—the opinion which Morton entertained of the Italian's subtlety and address, without greatly diminishing his suspicions of the Queen.

CHAPTER XVI.

"I take thy taunt as part of thy distemper,
 And would not feel as thou dost, for more shekels
 Than all our father's herds would bring, if weighed
 Against the metal of the sons of Cain."

BYRON.

THE trial of Chatelard was soon over. He was found guilty, and ordered for execution. Although this sentence was universally expected, there were many, like the Earl of Morton, who thought it too severe ; and, in consequence, down to the evening before it was to be carried into effect, the Queen was beset with many petitions to remit it to banishment. But in this the inflexibility, or obstinacy, of her race prevailed, and she at last would listen to no representation on the subject.

Had she been more austere in her character, this determination would have been entitled to the epithet of firmness ; but being occasionally heady, and fluctuating, it appeared to those who knew her best, to partake of caprice ; still it was one of the most conscientious instances of the elevation, with which she could on trying occasions sustain her dignity.

Over the grief of Adelaide we shall draw the curtain. Her father and Southennan were unremitting in their kindness to Chatelard ; but no one felt so much for him as Rizzio, whose remorse grew sharper as the time of the execution drew nearer and nearer. He was conscious of deserving the reproaches of

the prisoner, but his contrition overcame his policy ; and he resolved, whatever his reception might be, to visit him in the Castle. Accordingly, having obtained the necessary order, he proceeded at a late hour on the night previous to the execution, to the Castle. Knockwhinnie and Southennan, who knew of his intention, offered to accompany him, but he was too well aware that he was incurring some hazard of being reproached, to accept their company.

As he walked up the High-street, every thing seemed unusually still. His emotion increased as he ascended, insomuch that by the time he had reached the Castle-hill, he was profoundly sorrowful. Seeing a number of carpenters at work on the esplanade with lanterns and torches, he inquired as he passed what they were erecting there, for he knew not that the Castle-hill was the place of execution for state-criminals : when they replied that it was a scaffold for Chatelard, he could with difficulty prevent himself from sinking. His emotion, indeed, became so violent, that he was obliged to rest on a low parapet-wall, which in those days ran along part of the northern side of the esplanade.

While resting there, a gloomy train of conjectural anticipations, in their effect prophetic, filled his mind ; he thought of his own condition—a stranger—and, he suspected, friendless in the country ; holding an office, it was true, of trust and honour, but at the will of a fickle woman, and a still more variable council ; and who, for small offences, were prone to indulge in sudden and summary vengeance. All nature seemed to be in unison with his darkened reflections. The heavens were overcast—the North Loch, which lay beneath him, seemed, in the dimness of the night, like a pall of blackness. All objects around suggested funeral images,—the distant sea could not be seen, but its murmurs rose, through the silence of the dull air, with a low and querulous sound, that awakened dismal associations, as if Time were undermining the foundation and frame of things. Nothing was distinct to his eye, nor intelligible to his ear ; he had only a vague impression of noises and sounds, and a dreary monotonous confusion.

In this comfortless state and mood he was several times on the point of returning to Holyrood House without entering the Castle ; but as often as he was so inclined, a vivid picture of the condemned prisoner, forlorn in his cell, rose before him, amid wild fancies of chains and mouldy vaults, and racks, and other direful implements of painful death.

Several times the dreadful vision went and came, till it had

the influence of an impulse upon him, and obliged him to fulfil his intent.

He was admitted through the postern of the Castle-gate, and one of the guards conducted him to the tower in which Chatelard lay, where a little occurrence detained him for some time, before he could get admittance. The jailer was at his supper, and begged he might be allowed to finish it, as his wife, who had brought it up from the city, was anxious to return home.

Rizzio looked in at the door of the low grim vault, where the old man was sitting at the side of a large fire, eating his coarse but plentiful meal from a bench, on the end of which his wife was seated, holding a black iron lamp with rush wicks, to give him light, the fire having been covered up for the night.

It seemed to Rizzio that he had never seen a more hideous place. Various pieces of rusty armour and weapons hung on the walls. In one corner stood an engine, of which he could only shudder at the use; and he observed a huge instrument, resembling a pair of shears; for what purpose it was ever employed he feared even to think.

The light of the lamp being insufficient, the hagbutter, who came with him, went to the rack in the corner, and taking out of its windlass one of the iron hand-spikes, broke the coal into splinters on the fire, and presently a ruddy blaze illuminated all the room, and brought other horrid engines and weapons into view.

For a few minutes after the first shock at the sight of the dreadful things around, Rizzio stood in a kind of torpor, overwhelmed with dread and remorse.

The old man, having finished his supper, lighted him up a narrow damp stair with the lamp his stalwart wife had been holding, and turning the key, admitted him to Chatelard, who was lying stretched on the settle, which occupied nearly one side of the room. On the table stood a light in an old and curiously-fashioned brazen candlestick, as black as bronze with verdigris and negligence.

The old man, as soon as he had admitted him, retired, reminding him that he could not be allowed to remain long, as the gates would be soon shut for the night.

Chatelard, although he had thrown his eyes towards his visiter, yet did not appear at once to recognise him, for the wick of his own candle was high, and the air of the room, from a mist in which the Castle was then involved, was dense and obscure.

When Rizzio approached he started up, and abruptly de-

manded for what purpose he had come ; but in the moment, seeing in his hand the written order by which he had obtained admission, he exclaimed,

“ Ha ! then she has at last relented. Is it a pardon, or but a respite ? ”

Rizzio, affected by the wild look and voice with which the prisoner addressed him, was unable for some time to reply, and when he did say that it was neither respite nor pardon, his voice was tremulous and pathetic.

“ Then why have you come here ? ” cried Chatelard ; “ What evil have I ever done you, that your insidious suggestions should have brought me to this place ? ”

To this, a reply in the frame of Rizzio’s mind was not easy. His heart was full, and his mind was pitched to a tone of enthusiasm ; but when Chatelard, convulsed with grief and indignation, began to reproach him, that romantic momentary generosity was dissipated ; and the stinging reproaches with which he was assailed provoked his anger. Still, though his eyes flashed and his lips quivered, his voice scarcely underwent any change.

To the maledictions of the Frenchman, he returned cool and bitter taunts : scoffing at his vanity, and deriding his ambition. The altercation continued to increase in energy with Chatelard, until his agitation rose to phrensy ; while Rizzio appeared as if that violence only served to make him concentrate his self-possession, and to barb his sarcasms with harsher acrimony.

“ Taunt me no more ! ” cried Chatelard ; “ leave me ! let me make my peace with Heaven ! Surely thou wouldst not that I did less ! Go, Rizzio ! and when you recollect my vanity and my ambition, remember your own. I must fall on the scaffold ! When your own time comes, you will then think of me ! When the dagger of some other injured, or some contemptuous noble, provoked by your pride, deals your doom—a dog’s death—you will remember this night ! Go ! I see gouts of blood already on thy vest ! Fated man ! depart ! leave me ! ”

Rizzio could not withstand the hollow and superstitious voice in which this prediction was delivered. He turned round hastily, and beheld behind him a tall figure wrapped as it were in a shroud.

“ Your time is come ! ” said the jailer : for it was the old man come to apprise him that the Castle-gates must be shut for the night.

CHAPTER XVII.

"What a strange thing is circumstance!"

LORD ORFORD.

In the morning, Knockwhinnie, who was by that time fully apprized of the extent of his daughter's attachment to Chate-lard, rose at an early hour and left the Unicorn to visit her. He justly considered that to her the day would be dismal.

As he walked down the Cannongate, he met crowds of persons hastening from Leith and other parts of the country, to witness the tragedy on the Castle-hill; and turning round, he saw a vast multitude passing upwards in the High-street, and that the windows were filled with spectators: still all was calm as the serenity of the sabbath. He had not troubled himself to ascertain at what hour the blow was to be struck: from the moment he had parted from the prisoner he considered him as dead.

On reaching the Palace, he was immediately conducted to the apartment of Adelaide; but on entering, it was empty: nor could he learn, either from her maid Annette or any other of the servants, what had become of her.

He sat down in expectation of her return into the room, under a persuasion that she was with the Queen. In this, however, he was speedily undeceived; for he learned from the Lady Mary Livingstone, who came in quest of her, that she had not been with her Majesty that morning: an unusual circumstance.

At any other time her absence would not have excited so much interest; but the event of the day, and the extraordinary depression of her spirits during the preceding evening, caused a considerable degree of anxiety, which would probably have been greater but for the accident of the Count Dufroy being also absent. His absence, however, was purely incidental: he had walked out into the park, and returned while Knockwhinnie was expressing his surprise to the ladies, that Adelaide should have been in spirits enough to go abroad.

The return of Count Dufroy to the Palace alone, alarmed

Knockwhinnie ; and the ladies also were seized with a panic. Servants were despatched in all directions, and great confusion reigned in the Palace. This continued until noon, when the return of some of the guards, who had been to see the execution, apprized them that it was over : but still no tidings were heard of Adelaide. Then came Southennan, who, although he had not witnessed the catastrophe, had yet been on the Castle-hill ; led thither by a painful curiosity, which gave way to an anguish of mind that obliged him to take refuge from the horrors of the spectacle in an obscure house, until all was over. Rizzio had likewise been there, and had witnessed the glittering descent of the fatal axe : but no one had heard aught of Adelaide.

Knockwhinnie was indescribably distressed ; he could devise nothing to appease his anxiety : and a frightful apprehension took possession of his mind, that Chatelard was not the only victim sacrificed that morning : he feared that Adelaide had destroyed herself. Southennan was not without similar terror, and was equally incapable of directing or undertaking any measure which might lead to her discovery.

While they were in this affliction, Southennan was summoned out of the room by one of the Queen's servants.

"Your boy," said the man, "has come in great haste for you ; and will tell no one his business, until he sees yourself. Nor would he consent to wait ; but insisted, if you could not come out to him, that he should be permitted to come to you."

Southennan knew from this urgency that something of importance had occurred ; and his hopes flattered him, that possibly the boy had acquired some information concerning Adelaide : he accordingly went immediately down to the arcade of the Court, where Hughoc instantly joined him.

"Oh, Maister," said the boy, "guess what I hae seen ! Knockwhinnie's only dochter ; a jimp and lily-like leddy !"

"Well, what of her ? Where saw you her, and where is she ?"

"Ye maunna, Laird, be overly hasty ; but there's something brewing yonder that no yill."

"Well, speak ! tell me in as few words as possible !"

"Then she's in our lodgings !"

"In the house of Mistress Marjory ?"

"Deed is she ! and she's dressed a' in white ; and most doleful to see, sitting wi' her face covered wi' a white veil, the very marrow and fashion o' a corpse's in it's dead claes : and Mrs. Marjory is in a most extraordinar sorrow, for she gangs up and down the house, bot and ben ; and has, I think, twa towels to kep

her tears. And what d'ye think, Laird ? it's no to be spoken o', it's a secret that I overheard coming out o' the keyhole. The body o' the man that has gotten his head haggit aff, is to be brought to our house, where a' manner of pageantry is getting ready by Baldy and Father Jerome ; and the burial is to be in the Gray-friars kirk-yard, at the dead hour o' the night."

This information certainly surprised Southennan, who immediately rejoined Knockwhinnie and the Count, who were waiting for his return.

The mystery of Adelaide's absence was soon explained. She had heard incidently from her father, that Mistress Marjory was related to them, which had induced her to go to the old lady, and request her mediation to recover the remains of Chatelard ; for his treason having been without condjutors, the atrocious part of the punishment was remitted, and the body was allowed the rights of sepulture.

The Count Dufroy appeared much more distressed at hearing this sad instance of her love and grief, than Knockwhinnie. He proposed to go at once to her, and they then proceeded together. On entering, the house appeared as quiet as usual. Mistress Marjory was not visible, nor was there any thing in the manner of Baldy, who admitted them, to attract observation.

To his master's inquiry for Mistress Marjory, he returned a seeming careless answer ; but when the Count Dufroy inquired if he had been that morning at the Palace with a message for Adelaide, he looked confused, and found himself constrained to acknowledge the truth.

Southennan was visibly disturbed at this, and demanded, with a degree of severity he had never used towards this old domestic before,

"What is meant by so many plots, stratagems, and double dealings ? I will be trifled with no longer. Mistress Marjory is in the house, and Knockwhinnie's daughter is also here. Has the body yet arrived ?"

Baldy turned his head from side to side in extreme astonishment, and his eye glancing on Hughoc, who was standing in an obscure corner of the lobby in which this little scene took place, the boy instinctively crouched himself down into a heap, and covered his ears with his hands, as if in the terror of an immediate chastisement. Baldy was, however, not permitted to avenge his betrayal, but was peremptorily commanded to announce to the ladies, that Knockwhinnie and the Count Du

froy had heard what was intended, and that they both requested to see them.

Evasion being unavailing, Baldy went and delivered his message ; but instead of admitting the gentlemen into the chamber of grief, Mistress Marjory came out to them alone. Her explanation in no essential differed from what the boy had told, and she plead both with pity and entreaty, to permit Adelaide to indulge her mournful fancy.

"The burial," said she, "is to be this night, and the sooner it's o'er the sweet mademosle will begin to recover. Oh! it has been a calamitous and unchancy accident. I wish my house may ever get the better o' haeing a headless corpse brought to it."

After some farther discussion, in which it was agreed that Adelaide should be indulged, they went into the chamber where the body was laid out on a table, covered with a sheet. On entering the room Adelaide was seen sitting in a corner veiled, as the boy had described ; motionless, but frequently sighing. Opposite to her, on the other side of the apartment, Father Jerome was busy decorating a temporary altar, on which seven candles were standing already lighted ; for the room was darkened, and the whole spectacle was awful and solemn. On looking at the form on the table, Southennan, beheld that the head was not there. He, however, took no notice, but hastened his companions out of the room, and inquired as to this affecting circumstance of Baldy, who acknowledged that it had not yet been recovered from the executioner, who insisted, as Baldy said, for an unreasonable largesse for it. While they were thus speaking a rude knocking was heard at the door, and on its being opened, the old jailer of the state prison came forward with a basket, covered with a sack. He said something in a whisper to Baldy, who immediately took the basket from him, and saying to his master, "it's come now!" he carried it into the mourning chamber, from which a violent shriek in the same instant apprized them that Adelaide was aware of what had been brought.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"I was last night with all my ancestors!"

ANONYMOUS.

ALTHOUGH the Queen had, during the whole of that melancholy day, sustained herself with great steadiness, her heart and judgment were woefully at war, and when informed that the sentence had been carried into effect, her colour fled and she shed tears. Some of the Roman clergy paid her visits, but none, save her confessor, was admitted; he was long with her, and when he came away, it was observed that he was pale and thoughtful. The Earl of Morton also requested an audience, but was refused; after him Doctor Glossar also came to offer his spiritual consolations, but his visit was likewise declined, though in less decided terms, and he lingered in the gallery for some time, in expectation that he should still be admitted. The Prior of St. Andrew's also came, and was, on his name being sent in, immediately received.

The Queen, on seeing him enter, requested him, in her mildest manner, to sit beside her.

"Think not, James Stuart," said she, "though you find me thus greatly grieved, that it is from any weak affection for that unfortunate martyr."

"Your Majesty," replied the Prior, "applies a strange title to him!"

"Verily, no! because he has been sacrificed, not for any sin prohibited, but to appease the artificial demon of your cruel laws. It is not for him, my kind brother, that I am sorrowful; it is for myself. This has been a woful overture to my proposed marriage. Heaven knows what is to be the fruit of that which has been thus sown with blood! I am haunted with prophetic fears. It was a grim fancy, but I think it was as the axe fell, that I felt as it were its cold edge touch my own neck. Truly, I need solace: but where is it to be found? Oh! wherefore did I ever leave fair France, and all my happy days, behind; for even before I was sent there I had dismal reminiscences of the stern visages of rude rough men. I do

remember while yet a child, a fellow, one of your iron lords, came in, scowling like Decemher, while I was sitting on my mother's lap ; and in his right hand he held a dagger stained with blood. I clung in horror to my mother's bosom ; and she, sad lady ! not less in dread, held her hand over me to avert the blow ;—for she thought his treasonable intent was to take my life. But he was there as a protector, and had been assaulted by some adversary even within the Palace. This fell out at Falkland : and that same night I had a fearful dream, which time nor circumstance hath dimmed to my remembrance. Methought a long array of all our royal ancestors came and looked piteously on me, as I lay beside my mother, whom I dreamed was then dead ; each and all of them, as they passed sorrowfully by, showed me the blemish of some violent death, which had attended on them all. Often have I shuddered at that dream ; and now I begin to understand the vision ! Oh, I am as one amid the spectres of slaughtered kings ; and when I would think of those who of our race were deemed more fortunate ; I cannot recall the name of one whose fortunes were not disastrous !”

The Prior was melted with compassion and sympathy ; he felt as if a sense of some undivulged ancestral curse was upon himself, and he acknowledged, that he had of late received strange intimations by auguries and signs, to which none could give meaning, but which something unblest of a fore-doom in his own mind enabled him to understand.

“ Oh, why is my affection for you so troubled with distrust ?”

“ Distrust,” exclaimed the Prior, “ what incantation hath raised that fiend ; in what other way than by my love and my fidelity, can I more prove myself deserving of your confidence ?”

“ Alas ! you have changed your God. Can I help fearing, that having dared so much you can remain true to me ? And you have done it corruptly too ; for still you wear that consecrated garb, and yet in all things how zealous are you against our ancient and holy altars !”

“ Your Majesty's ear hath been abused, and I can but hope to prove, by the probity of my life, and the purity of my heart, the piety of my change. I can make no professions. Let me be tested, and I shall come brighter from the trial.”

There was some justice in his suspicion, for the Queen's confessor had tampered with her for the confidence she placed in “ the apostate bastard,” as he was commonly called by the papistical party, and had represented to her that the sacrifice

of Chatelard was a machination of the Lords of the Congregation to bring her into disrepute with the people, among whom her gentleness and beauty were beginning to acquire their natural influence.

"Believe not," said she, "that I tell you of this fear in reproach—no, it is said in love and sorrow. I need your help—I need the help of all good men—but I am helpless!"

With that quiet and subdued firmness of character, for which the Prior was, in all the vicissitudes of life, so eminently distinguished, he softly remonstrated against the superstitious character she had given to her fancies, and exhorted her to consult only those who advised her to avoid every measure which might sow rancour in any breast.

"Yet," cried she, "how have I been driven to the extremity which has been this day consummated. Oh! I am miserable: my heart confides in you, but reason and religion would almost persuade me to cancel the bond!"

Perceiving that, in the passion of her thoughts, expostulation would be of no avail, he retired, hoping that in the society of her ladies, she might find some pastime to alleviate her forebodings. But the event which had recalled the omens of her early years was too awful to be resisted. The instrument was out of tune, the strings jangled in discord, and she remained secluded for the day: agitated, and often trembling with alarm at the phantoms she invoked herself.

As the evening declined her fearfulness increased. Her imagination darkened with the fading twilight, and she thought the clouded heavens, as she looked from her casement, were traced with incomprehensible prodigies. It was, indeed, one of those nights when the heavens, to the ordinary eye, exhibit no intelligible phenomenon; but to the doomed, who have the sense of destiny upon them, appear written all over with intimations as dismal as the lurid sentence of the Baby onian King.

CHAPTER XIX.

"For close designs and crooked counsels fit,
Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit."

DRYDEN.

BUT whatever was the distressful state of the Queen's mind, it was enviable compared to that of Rizzio. He had returned from witnessing the fate of his friend, whom his advice, covertly given to promote his own interest, had brought to the scaffold. He was intrusted with the management of a delicate matter of state, the intimation of her Majesty's intention to marry again; but in which he had discovered, by what the Earl of Morton had said to himself, that little faith was reposed in his integrity. Remorse, indignity suffered, and hungry ambition, were scorpions in his bosom.

Sometimes he reasoned with himself, to appease the up-braidings of his conscience, that the weakness of Chatelard was alone to blame; but still there was a lurking, secret self-conviction, that he had interestedly contributed to his ruin: it gnawed his heart with the anguish of the worm that never dies. At others, he was afflicted with the certainty of being held in no right esteem. He knew his own superiority in accomplishments and qualities; nor was his comparative estimate of himself diminished, even while tingling with the humiliating experience of being undervalued; a feeling, the deepest and the keenest to which the human breast can be exposed without guilt.

Cogitating of these things, and especially of the Earl of Morton's sarcasm, he exclaimed—"Yes, it shall be so, my lord; if I can, I will find a patron in the husband of the Queen—he will be your master and my tool. What is my inherited blemish, that the boors and bandits of this bleak and inhospitable land dare to treat me with such contumely!"

At this moment the recollection of Chatelard's prediction, glared like a ghost across his mind, and scared the phantoms of ambition.

"But it is an unequal fight," he added, disconsolately, "an individual against a host—a stranger, a defenceless stranger,

against a banded household—a savage clan—a nation of clans, who deem him criminal—merely because he is a stranger. Yes ; my fate is inevitable, whatever prosperity may, in the interim, spread with the loftiest growth over me, a violent death awaits me ; would I had never crossed the Alps, but, in the cool cloister of our college, spent all my easy days in patient study ! But the end of life is much the same to all ; the axe of treason ; the secret phial ; the assassin's stroke ; disease or accident ; or nature tearing down aching old age ; all prove that the worth of life lies in the interim, between the cradle and the coffin : but there are fools who babble of fame, and for an unsubstantial blazon, struggle with destiny. And what is fame but an embalmed mummy ? itself naught ; even while exhaling odours.”

This course of reflection soon came to its natural result—a determination to study his own advancement, and to leave the issues to time ; and thus it happened, that the Prior of St. Andrew's, after his painful interview with the Queen, found him framing instructions for the ministers abroad, as to the sort of character who would be acceptable to the Queen and the nation ; while in his own mind he had determined to find a fitter for his purposes than any of the princes they were likely to recommend.

He exhibited the paper on which he was employed to the Prior, who read it carefully over, pausing at several points, and applauding certain passages distinguished for eloquence and sagacity ; and who, on returning it, sat down beside Rizzio, saying, in a manner, which, though not intended to be in any degree particular, was felt to be significant,

“ Do you think any character is to be found who will suit this description, which I acknowledge is truly what we want ? If so, I cannot but approve, as every one indeed must do, the felicity of your writing ; but if you do not, and have only been ambitious of showing your own talent, then I think it were better to alter the paper.” And, fixing his eyes steadily on Rizzio, he added, after a brief suspension, “ But, from your well-known acuteness, it may be suspected, by those who entertain invidious opinions of honesty, that you have been in this matter actuated by some sinister motive.”

Rizzio replied with unmoved equanimity, that he always endeavoured to do his best ; and he was surprised it should be thought, in so important a matter, he could have any other purpose in view than the plain performance of a most important duty.

"The rule," said the Prior, "is a wise one; but this despatch is framed with reference to some other object than the purport bears. It lacks the spirit of sincerity. I am critical, not as a member of her Majesty's Council, but as if I were reading it as a passage in a book. It is well indited, and, for a public document, framed more in the humour of philosophy than in the usage of state writings."

Rizzio still preserved his countenance, though disconcerted. He was not aware that he had to deal with any such fine penetration, and said,

"I will endeavour to make a new letter, that may wear the appearance of more earnestness; but I cannot make it more sincere."

"That I believe. How could you, having so much in mind to which the matter of the letter does not refer?"

"What can I have," exclaimed the Italian, "but a desire that it may be well thought of? And therefore, in the writing, I may have been more studious in my terms, than had the subject been less likely to obtain special attention."

"Now," said the Prior, smiling, "you have given me some reason not to think so well of you as I have hitherto done; for I attributed these well-ordered sentences to your mind being occupied with the fate of the unhappy Chatelard; but since it is not so, I can only wonder with what you were engaged. It must have been something touching your own fortunes."

"Truly, my Lord, you have guessed curiously. The fate of Chatelard has fearfully admonished me that I stand on the verge of a cliff, and that a little wind may blow me down the steep. I was, therefore, sad with the thought of being here friendless, having no one to claim the help of in any difficulty."

The Prior felt some regret for what he had said; for he did not mean either sarcasm or insinuation, and was grieved to think he had disturbed a disordered string in the alien's breast; for he could not but acknowledge to himself that the expiation of Chatelard's offence was severe, and calculated to make a deep impression on all who stood equally unfriended, and especially on his successor, in whose circumstances there was a striking similarity.

"I pray you, Rizzio," said he, "to put no more meaning into my words than they express. I but spoke to you lightly; being saddened with the grief in which I have left her Majesty, I may have seemed graver than befitted the occasion. You have a difficult station to maintain; but we have men among

us who can value worth ; and therefore I would say, be as lowly in their eyes as you can, for we are all jealous of overweening, whether it be the pride of talent, the arrogance of birth, or the exultation arising from success of any kind."

Soon after, the Prior went away, leaving Rizzio in considerable uneasiness. He had not apprehended that there were any such subtle metaphysicians about the Court, and he was vexed to think that the state of his mind could be so easily detected. The natural effect of the interview was, in consequence, a resolution on his part to be more circumspect : but the resolution was at variance with the promptings of his nature : and no endeavour to act upon it could be uniformly maintained, nor last long.

CHAPTER XX.

" My particular grief
Is of so flood-gate and o'erbearing nature,
That it ingulfs and swallows other sorrows,
And yet is still itself."

OTHELLO.

IN the mean time the preparations for the funeral of Chate-lard were completed ; and Knockwhinnie, with his daughter, together with Southennan, his servants, and Father Jerome, assembled at the house of the sexton of the Gray Friars about half-an-hour before midnight. Soon after, the coffin containing the remains was brought there by Johnnie Gaff, and three other persons whom he had employed for the purpose, and to assist in digging the grave ; for the sexton was an old man, lame and paralytical, needing aid in his vocation.

The night being cloudy, and the wind gusty, the mourners remained in the sexton's house until the grave was prepared ; while Southennan's servants, each carrying a lantern, accompanied the sexton and his assistant to the spot of sepulture. The silence of the night, broken only by an occasional hollow sweep of the wind, was of itself fearfully calculated to awaken gloomy reflections ; but the business was so absorbing, that it alone interested the thoughts and feelings of those engaged in it

The grave was dug without even a whisper ; and when it was finished, the boy informed the mourners. Two ropes being fastened to the coffin, the ends of one of them were taken by Knockwhinnie and Southennan, and those of the other by Johnnie Gaff and one of the labourers. Baldy and the boy carried the two lanterns in front ; and Father Jerome, with Adelaide leaning on his arm, followed in the rear.

The procession in this order moved slowly over the rough and uneven surface and tombstones. No requiem was chanted. On reaching the spot, the coffin was at once lowered, and Father Jerome repeated over it the service for the dead.

The deep tone of his voice, mingled with the low rushing murmur of the wind, excited a supernatural awe ; and the impression swelled the hearts of all present with an eerie sentiment of indefinite dread.

Throughout this dismal transaction no sigh escaped from Adelaide : she was serene and sustained, inasmuch as to appear almost insensible. Her motions were like the mutation of an orb in its course : and when she stood, she was as a statue at rest. Knockwhinnie was calm, and by the quickness with which he observed and removed every little impediment to the regular performance of the rites, showed that he, though unaccustomed to such solemn ceremonies, was yet not mastered by his sensibility. Southennan was deeply distressed, and in his anxiety to remove Adelaide as quickly as possible from the spot, pushed part of the mould hastily into the grave with his foot. She observed the irreverence, and drew him back with some degree of violence.

Her father, who had also observed it, said,

" All is now over, Adelaide : let us return into the house, and when the sexton has done his part the servants will come to us."

The boy, on hearing this, moved round with his lantern to show the way, and Southennan offered his arm to assist Adelaide, but she indicated, by the waving of her hand, that she still desired to remain. Her father gently remonstrated, and pointed to the troubled state of the skies to warn her of the increasing inclemency of the night. She, however, made no reply, she only drew her mantle closer and sat down on a tombstone near the grave.

When the dust was all filled in, Father Jerome pronounced the *benedicite*, and a procession was formed to return, but Adelaide sat still.

The old man, observing her intention to remain alone, di-

rected the sexton and the servants to retire. Knockwhinnie was grieved at her sorrowful pertinacity, as it seemed to him, and earnestly, almost to chiding, entreated her to come away. After a considerable interval she arose and followed her father, and it was evident from that moment, that a change had come over her. She had made some strong mental exertion to restrain her grief, which had almost amounted to despair, and the altered state of her feelings were manifested by a brief expression.

"He loved me not!" said she: "and perhaps, towards him my regard was too openly disclosed; but that is past. Peace be with him!"

At these words the boy touched the arm of his master with a sudden jerk, and cried, with a fearful smothered voice in his ear,

"Look there?"

Southennan turned hastily round, and beheld a tall dark form between him and a faint streak of the Northern lights, which at that moment streamed up from the horizon. It was standing on a table-tomb, close by the path they were to pass.

Southennan snatched the lantern from the boy, and held it up to examine who appeared there so apparitional. The light flashed full on the visage of the stanger. He was ghastly pale; his eyes glittered; and his teeth were hideously on edge, white and protuberant. Another sweep of the lantern revealed a dagger glimmering in his elevated grasp, ready to strike.

All eyes were fixed upon the obtruder, and in the same moment Johnnie Gaff, with an irresistible stroke of the spade in his hand, struck down the uplifted arm with such energy, that the assassin was hurled headlong from the tomb down upon the ground, and so stunned by the fall that he lay motionless where he fell.

The lights were instantly brought around him, and on raising his head he was discovered to be Auchenbrae. With his characteristic impetuosity Knockwhinnie would instantly have turned his own dagger against him, but Southennan wrested it from his hand.

"No," exclaimed he; "it must not be so. Conduct Adelaide from this dreadful place, and take the boy and a light with you. I will remain with the men until this rash bedlamite, for less he cannot be, may be removed. I beseech you go at once; for see he already begins to move."

Southennan, then with the assistance of the men, had Au-

chenbrae carried into the sexton's house, where, after applying the remedies easiest obtained on such occasions, he was soon recovered from the immediate effects of the contusion he had suffered in his forehead.

While Knockwhinnie with the boy, was conducting his daughter back to the house of Mrs. Marjory, Southennan entered into some conversation with his prisoner, and among other things expressed his astonishment that Auchenbrae should be so implacable against Knockwhinnie, who had never done him any harm, but whom he had so vitally injured.

Auchenbrae looked at him as he made this remark, with an almost demoniacal expression of derisive contempt, and said,

"Is it not enough, then, that I know he must be my deadly enemy? You say I have injured him deeply. Can he do otherwise than hate me? and is he not one that has proved that his revenge can only be satisfied with blood?"

"Well," replied Southennan, with a repugnance blended with horror at these atrocious remarks, "what would you have gained had you taken his life? Is not your condition already miserable enough? A gentleman born, hunted like a wild beast, shunned by all of your own rank, and a proverb of disgrace in the mouths of the people."

Auchenbrae, notwithstanding his weather-beaten complexion, became ghastly with rage, and had he possessed a weapon, would probably have inflicted vengeance on the spot.

"Who are you?" he exclaimed, with a shrill and throttling utterance of immeasurable passion; "Who are you, that dare to address me in that language?"

Southennan looked at him with an unchanging countenance, and said, calmly—

"I perceive it is of no avail, at least at this time, either to advise you or to argue with you."

Auchenbrae made several attempts to resume their conversation, but Southennan paid no attention to what he said, regarding his complaints and his audacity with equal indifference.

CHAPTER XXI.

"My heart revolts within me, and two voices
Make themselves audible within my bosom."

DEATH OF WALLENSTEIN.

ON the following morning the Count Dufroy, at the request of Knockwhinnie, and with the permission of the Queen, conducted Adelaide to Linlithgow, and placed her under the care of her grandmother, the old Lady Kilburnie, who then resided there. Knockwhinnie himself, also, went at the same time into the west country, to superintend the repairs of his castle, which during his long absence had fallen into great dilapidation : but Southennan remained in Edinburgh some short time longer, not deeming it delicate to obtrude his attachment on Adelaide, until time should in some degree soften her sorrow. He had, however, another motive.

Although the almost demoniacal animosity which Auchenbrae cherished against Knockwhinnie, and had so fiendishly avowed, filled the honourable bosom of Southennan with mingled horror and disgust, it was yet, upon consideration, not deemed advisable that any public notice should be taken of the murderous intent which had been so happily frustrated. Accordingly, before leaving the sexton's house in the morning, Southennan informed him that he would undertake, without waiting for the permission of Knockwhinnie, to let him go free. In this he evinced a discernment of character beyond his years and experience.

From the time he had refrained from conversing with Auchenbrae, he sat ruminating beside him, occasionally remarking with interest and even sympathy, the changes on his countenance, during those transient fits of contrition and self-reproach to which, as we have already described, he was sometimes subject. After a considerable interval, when the fire had fallen low, and the dawn was beginning to brighten through the aperture which served as a window to the apartment, Southennan saw with inexpressible surprise, amounting almost to a feeling of awe, tears in the eyes of the delinquent, and collecting in what way he had placed himself under his pro-

tection, when he surrendered in the garb of Johnnie Gaff, he said,

"I suspect, Auchenbrae, you have a greater enemy in yourself than in Knockwhinnie,—ought you not to master that one first? I remember when we first met, the gallant bearing with which you claimed my protection. I could not have then conceived that the same person could so far forego his nature, as to place himself in your present situation."

Auchenbrae made no reply, but the tears which glittered in his eyes began to flow down his cheeks.

"Come," rejoined Southennan, deeply affected, while he wondered at a grief that might be termed unmanly, "if you regret the unprovoked injuries done to Knockwhinnie, resolve to weed your mind of the intents you indulge against him, and I will undertake that he shall not molest you."

"I know not," replied Auchenbrae, "why I am thus at times so moved. I would that I could keep in the mood—but it is my fate to feel upon me these breathings of a better spirit only at intervals, few and far between. I am one of those whose good and evil angels possess alternately the mastery of each other, but the better is the weaker, and can but briefly retain the ascendancy."

"Take a part in the conflict," said Southennan, falling into his fancy; "call in your will to help the good angel. Give me your honour that you will struggle against the unprovoked malice of your enmity to Knockwhinnie, and you are at liberty to depart."

"I may do so, and with religious sincerity; but I cannot answer for sufficient constancy of purpose to maintain it."

"Give me your promise, and try. The pledge of your honour will serve as a remembrancer when the hour of weakness, the unguarded hour, may come again."

"I thought," resumed Auchenbrae, "to erase the taint of my nature by turning monk. Not one of all the brotherhood, with whom I hoped to redeem my errors, more patiently endured their penances than I did mine, or put themselves to the probation of such severities; but the fiend ever and anon prevailed. As often as I reached the hill-top resolution failed, and I was hurled again to the bottom!"

"Still," replied Southennan, "that is no reason to abandon the endeavour. Say only, you will impose a truce on your revenge, if so you call it, and I will let you go."

"It is soon said; but how long shall I be able to enforce it?"

"I will trust you ; but remember, you must give me notice when you desire it shall end."

Some farther conversation to the same effect passed between them, and in the end Southennan consented to his escape, and they left the sexton's house together as the sun was rising ;—Auchenbrae expressing his determination to set out immediately for England, that among strangers and new scenes he might cultivate sedater habits and better thoughts, as if he could leave his nature and propensities behind.

His friends, rejoicing in this resolution, gladly procured for him letters to many persons of note at the Court of Elizabeth, and, among others, to the Earl of Lennox, the father of Lord Darnley : Rizzio also was applied to on his behalf, and, in consequence, intrusted him with duplicates of the despatches to the Scottish Ambassador, relative to the Queen's matrimonial intentions.

Before this Rizzio knew nothing of him, not even his name ; but when he came to receive the despatches, he perceived something of his reckless humour, and a short conversation convinced him that he might be rendered subservient to his own views. He accordingly apprized him in some degree of the contents and object of the letters, and informed him it was understood that Darnley, who stood in the same relationship, to the English Queen as their own Sovereign, had many accomplishments, which might render him an acceptable match, and he engaged Auchenbrae to make himself acquainted with that young nobleman, and to write him confidentially as to his true character, an office which, by implying a trust of some delicacy, was agreeable to, though little in accordance with the habitual vocations of Auchenbrae. Out of this accidental arrangement, which was not regarded at the time of any very special importance, the voluntary exile, immediately on reaching London, was induced to cultivate the confidence of Darnley, a congenial spirit, and to communicate the results of his observations to Rizzio. In the end, at the suggestion of the Italian, he so worked upon the inclinations and vanities of Darnley, that he persuaded him to visit the Scottish Court, not, however, ostensibly as a candidate for the Queen's favour, but as a visiter, who was heir to the large domains of the earldom of Lennox. But before we proceed with the narrative of the events which ensued, it is necessary to enter into some historical explanations.

CHAPTER XXII.

"The heavens still must work."

CYMBELINE.

THE intimation of the Queen's intention to marry again, led to many proposals from foreign princes, but they were all objectionable. The dislike of the nation to a foreign marriage, independent of religious considerations, ultimately induced the friends of the Scottish Queen to advise her to an union with some one of those who stood in the line of succession to the Crown; and the young Lord Darnley, among others, was suggested as the most desirable connexion, on many accounts, and particularly as his mother's claim to the succession of the English Crown was thought by many superior to that of Mary. She was the daughter of Margaret, the eldest sister of Henry VIII. by the Earl of Angus, whom that princess married after the death of her chivalrous husband, James IV. the hero of Flodden Field and Marmion.

In proposing this match, the interests both of Scotland and of England were judiciously consulted; for the Countess of Lennox, the mother of Darnley, though born of a second marriage, was one degree nearer in the blood royal of England than Mary. She was the daughter, Mary only the granddaughter, of Margaret, from whom their respective claims were derived; and there was some dubiety, in those days, in the right of succession, arising from this circumstance.

Rizzio was not long of being sensible of the popular advantages which Darnley possessed over every other competitor, and he had learned from Auchenbrae, that, in external accomplishments and appearance, the young Lord had no rival in the English court.

He was then in the first bloom and vigour of youth: in beauty and gracefulness of person he surpassed all his contemporaries; he eminently excelled in those arts which add ease and elegance to external form, and which enabled him not only to dazzle, but to please. His intellectual qualifications were not, however, commensurate with his appearance: he was soft and simple, addicted to pleasure, conceited, and of a mean understanding; but these defects were the qualities

which recommended him to Rizzio, and induced him to urge Auchenbrae, as we have intimated, to persuade Darnley to visit the Court of Holyrood.

Mary was of an age and of a temper to feel the full influence of Darnley's accomplishments : and the impression which he made upon her was visible from the time of their first interview. The whole business of the Court was, from that day, devoted to amuse and to entertain this illustrious guest ; and in all those scenes of gayety, Darnley, whose qualifications were entirely superficial and showy, appeared to great advantage. His conquest of the Queen's heart became complete ; and inclination prompted her to conclude a marriage, the first thought of which had probably been suggested by considerations merely political.

But before we proceed to the circumstances immediately connected with the nuptials, it is necessary to advert to a public event, which, though in itself foreign to that transaction, had, by its results on others, a material effect upon it.

There had been a rebellion in the North, in which the Prior of St. Andrew's, who had long abjured the Roman church, and had secularized himself, commanded the Queen's forces. In this service he was greatly distinguished, and in consequence she rewarded him with the earldom of Murray.

Few of the Scottish statesmen of that turbulent time have been more misrepresented than this eminent character. The Papists, indignant at his apostacy, with malevolent ingenuity, have traduced his purest actions ; and the Protestants, as it were in retaliation, have had as little respect for truth in extenuating his errors. He may not, in point of talent, have been a great man ; but the commonalty, in applying to him the epithet of " the good Regent," seem to have justly appreciated his virtues, of which prudence was undoubtedly the predominant, united with courage and fortitude.

Whether from the discipline of his ecclesiastical education, or from natural temperament, he was quiet in all his habitudes, and renowned for his piety. The sincerity of his affection for his sister, the Queen, has been questioned ; but so long as Mary was true to herself, the Earl of Murray was a true brother and most devoted subject ; and so much did the uncompromising Knox regard him as a man blindly zealous for her interests, that at one time, on that very account, he renounced his friendship. This rupture is a strong proof of Murray's sincere attachment to the Queen. Nor is the part which he took in opposing her marriage with Darnley any proof to the

contrary ; for he was one of the first who discovered the deficiencies in that Prince's character ; and in consequence, although he had been originally favourable to the match, he soon perceived that it was not likely to prove either happy to the Queen or fortunate to the kingdom.

It is true that, from the time of Darnley's arrival, he had experienced the inconsistencies of Mary ; and when he explained to her his objections to the marriage, he soon perceived that her affections began to be gradually estranged, and that the Court favourites combined against him, and flattered the wishes of the Queen. His proud spirit could not brook the diminution of his power ; and he retired into the country, and gave place to rivals with whom he was unable to contend.

His secession from the Queen's party produced such an impression on the people, that she was obliged to control her alienated feelings, and to recall him to Court, where she received him with many demonstrations of respect and confidence. Her object was to obtain his assent to her marriage ; but he still refused, and from that time the calamities of her miserable reign began.

But although the Earl of Murray was the first who publicly opposed himself to the marriage, Rizzio had soon equal cause to repent of the part he had taken in promoting the match ; for Darnley, like all persons of inferior understanding, was difficult to manage, and the Italian soon discovered that weakness of judgment is not always accompanied with suitable humility. The affection with which the Queen at first sight was inspired for the young Lord, surpassed his calculations ; he had trusted that by his own address alone he would accomplish the marriage, and thereby lay Darnley under the greatest obligations : but in this he was disappointed ; for the partiality of Mary was so openly manifested, that Darnley could in no way regard himself as indebted to Rizzio.

The Italian, however, though disappointed, was not baffled ; he saw that the folly of the young Lord could not long remain undiscovered by the Queen, nor the fascination of his personal beauty long prevent the exercise of her natural intelligence ; and accordingly, as ascendancy in the state was the object of his ambition, he perceived that the wisest course for his purposes was to devote himself exclusively to her Majesty.

Having thus reminded the reader of these historical circumstances, we shall now resume the domestic transactions of the Scottish Court.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"I had rather be a toad,
And live upon the vapour of a dungeon,
Than keep a corner in the thing I love
For others' use."

OTHELLO.

WHEN the time appointed for the nuptials of Mary and Darnley drew near, Adelaide was invited back to Court ; and Southennan, who had, during that interval, been abroad, returned to partake of the bridal festivities. For, notwithstanding the distracted state of the kingdom, arising from the conflicts of the two religious factions, the Protestants and the Papists, the celebration of the marriage was expected to be one of the most brilliant incidents in the domestic records of Scotland.

Rizzio by this time had risen to high consideration with the Queen, and enjoyed a greater degree of her favour than any other individual of her government. He was more freely admitted to her private circle, and more consulted in her personal concerns. This afforded him opportunities of becoming more familiarly acquainted with the mild and retiring merits of Adelaide than he had been before. During the preparations for the royal nuptials, he was observed by Darnley to pay her, as he supposed, particular attention. But only one passion can rule in the human heart : and Rizzio was too much possessed by ambition, to yield to any gentler sentiment.

Darnley, from observing this supposed attachment, was led to be more particular in his notice of Adelaide herself ; and, in consequence, the marriage had not been celebrated many weeks, when the sharp-sighted Italian discovered that she was becoming the object of his faithless designs—a discovery which his ingenuity suggested might be turned to his own advantage. In the mean time, the sorrow of Adelaide for the fate of her first love had faded ; but the affection which Southennan had so long cherished was undiminished ; and soon after her return to Court, Rizzio, as well as many others, saw that it was no longer a hopeless passion.

Darnley, who was never restrained in his self-indulgence by considerations of delicacy, began, with indecorous warmth, even before the honey-moon was well over, to express to Adelaide his admiration of her beauty. At first she ascribed the familiarity to his obtuse tact, which by this time had become sufficiently obvious; but when he repeated it with greater freedom, she evinced her resentment, by calmly assuring him, that unless he desisted, she would solicit her Majesty's permission to withdraw from Court.

This decision should have apprized the weak and licentious prince of the necessity of bridling his impetuous desires; but it had only the effect of making him feel, that in marrying the Queen he had subjected himself to some degree of bondage, and to a responsibility at variance with what he conceived to be happiness. This unwise reflection, and the circumstance of being on all occasions addressed as the inferior of the Queen, made him, as it were, disgusted with the dignity to which he had been raised; and it destroyed the enjoyment and prosperity which, it may be almost said, naturally appertained to his lot.

It is a remarkable instance of the innate coarseness of Darnley's character, that although his attention had been first attracted to Adelaide by the manner of Rizzio towards her, he yet made him the confidant of the passion with which she had animated himself.

Rizzio affected grief and apprehension at the disclosure, and, with all his art and eloquence, pointed out the danger he was provoking, by so soon after his marriage giving the Queen so great a cause of complaint, and, to the noblemen who had been averse to the match, warrentry to take some decided step to his prejudice.

These strictures had the effect which they were probably intended to produce; they apprized Darnley that he had placed himself so far in the power of Rizzio. Still, with that singular contempt of public opinion, which led himself and the kingdom afterward into so many troubles, the difficulties which stood in the way of gratifying his guilty wishes became incitements; and he again addressed Adelaide, with greater boldness. He had not discernment enough to perceive, that under her meek exterior and mild demeanour, a prompt and resolute spirit lay couched.

It was at a mask in the Palace that he repeated his profane admiration. Adelaide listened to him for some time, with grave attention; and when, mistaking her silence and serenity,

he concluded with an ignominious proposal, she made him a profound reverence, and, without returning any answer, went to Southennan, who was standing at some distance, and informed him of the insult she had received from the King ; for the infatuated Mary had conferred on Darnley that dignity.

Considering the disparity of rank between the parties, and the peculiar circumstances of Darnley, the communication placed our hero in a situation of extreme difficulty ; but the latent energy of Adelaide being roused, her conduct on the occasion was full of dignity. Leaving Southennan to determine as to what his own conduct should be, she returned to the King, and, with all becoming humility, informed his Majesty that she had reported his proposal to Southennan, to whom his Majesty was aware she had been for some time betrothed. The immediate effect of this firmness on the rash and shallow Darnley, was an angry and petulant remonstrance from him, in which, however, he was suddenly checked, by Southennan coming close up to him, and looking him sternly in the face ; at the same time asking the Count Dufroy, who was leaning on his arm, something which gave him an opportunity of adding these words, which he delivered with an emphasis that Darnley could not misunderstand :

“ While the law, by the distractions of the kingdom, is unable to protect the subject, the vindication of private wrongs by personal means is perhaps a duty.”

The Count, who was opposed to that pernicious doctrine of the age, replied, in a regretful tone,

“ I had thought better of you, Southennan, than that you would ever advocate opinions so dangerous to society.”

“ I once thought so too,” replied Southennan, his countenance glowing with indignation, as he again looked at Darnley ; “ but I had not then conceived it possible that I could be injured without having the means of obtaining redress ; far less that one who might not be called to account would venture to do so !”

The Count Dufroy, altogether unaware of the provocation, resumed his argument, and said,

“ I can never admit the occultation of a principle, however strong the expediency of it may appear, as less itself than a great crime.”

“ Let us see,” replied Southennan, “ what his Majesty thinks on the subject.”

But Darnley was alarmed at the tone and look of Southennan ; and yielding to his natural pusillanimity, deserted alike

by manhood and dignity, he hastily retired to another apartment.

For that time the Queen was spared from hearing of the fickle and unworthy disposition of her young consort; but his true character could not long be concealed from her penetration. Before the wedding festivals were over, she herself discovered the slight hold she possessed over his affections; and she frequently sighed with a conviction, that in disregarding the admonitions of the Earl of Murray, she had incurred the hazard of dishonour to herself, and of troubles to the kingdom. But even in these painful reflections, her attachment to the ill-fated cause of them suffered no material change. She attributed the unprincipled conduct of Darnley to the reckless unsteadiness of youth; and flattered herself, by some greater endeavour to please, she would allure him from his errors. This, the first dictate of love conscious of being neglected, was calculated to impair its power. The endeavour to please was soon felt to be a task; and, like all other tasks, it tired the labourer.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

"—— Mine Italian brain
'Gan, in your duller Britain, operate
Most vilely."

CYMBELINE.

As soon as the nuptial revels were over, the Count Dufroy announced his intention of returning to France. He conceived that he had, both to the letter and the spirit, performed his promise to the Queen's uncles, the Princes of Lorraine; and that now, when she had blended her fortunes with those of a consort, he could with no consistency do otherwise than abdicate the charge he had undertaken, in consequence of accompanying her as a personal adviser to Scotland. But he was mortified at the apparent indifference with which she accepted his resignation, and yet he ought not to have been so.

His duty had obliged him to controvert her inclinations: but, although he uniformly acted with his wonted delicacy, yet such had been the state of her mind for some time previous,

that she shrank involuntarily from him, as well as from all those in whom she was assured, both by their character and her own experience, confidence might be safest placed. She was in that condition in which the counsels of the wisest friendships are often irksome ; when, though the wisdom be acknowledged, the icy touch of destiny benumbs the will, and freezes the current of action. The demon of her race was asserting his dominion ; the unknown ancestral curse which had for so many ages blasted her fathers, was falling upon her ; and, conscious of being in the stream of fate, she sat as amazed and helpless as the Indian, when he feels his canoe hurling him towards some inevitable cataract.

"Has then your Majesty," said the Count, "no wish, of which I may be the honoured bearer to the Princes?"

"Truly, I might laden you with wishes," she replied ; "but it would be sending chaff to the mill ; for all mine are buds that never come to blossom. Tell the Cardinal, however, that I beseech to be remembered in his prayers ; and," she subjoined, in a low and inward voice, "I need that charity."

"Is there no more your Majesty would be pleased I should communicate?" said the Count.

"What more ? You will tell his eminence that you have seen me married : doubtless you can say, happily?" And looking at him inquisitively for an instant, she added, in a tone so calm and sad that it almost overcame his firmness, "Tell him I am matched as becomes the fortunes of my house"—and her voice slightly faltered, but, after a momentary pause, she resumed, "and he knows that the King is of the same line."

These few simple words spoke volumes to the Count ; but they were uttered with so much apparent equanimity, that he could no otherwise receive them than as light and ordinary phrases, even while he felt them sink into his heart like drops of molten fire.

As he was on the point of retiring, she rose with the evident intention of evincing the sense she entertained of his faithful and dignified services, but a sudden paleness overspread her countenance, and, drawing her hand hurriedly over her eyes, she abruptly left the room.

Whatever the disappointment might have been which the Count had suffered by the seeming coolness with which his resignation had been accepted, the profound and hidden sensibility betrayed in this little scene changed it to a far different feeling. That her marriage would prove unfortunate was a prospective fear, which he shared in common with many of

her truest servants ; but that her hopes were already suffering blight, was a discovery which too soon anticipated his darkest apprehensions.

The departure of the Count Dufroy was followed by that of nearly all the other distinguished foreigners : Rizzio was the only one of talent and influence who remained ; but perhaps there was no other with whom the Scottish nobles and gentry would have more willingly parted. His talents were fully acknowledged ; and, in his capacity as foreign secretary to the Queen, he had continued to prove his superiority, both of understanding and intelligence, on every new occasion wherein he was called to act. But it was alleged, not without reason, that he conducted for his mistress a secret correspondence with the leaders of the Papal party on the continent, prejudicial to the interest of the state and to the ecclesiastical reformation of Scotland. Moreover his personal conduct had for some time, as trusts and riches were heaped upon him, become offensive to many of the old statesmen, and disagreeable to the courtiers in general. He affected extraordinary splendour in his appearance, which was rendered the more remarkable, as his personal endowments were in no way eminent ; nor was he careful to abate that envy which always attends such an extraordinary and rapid change of fortune ; on the contrary, he studied to display the whole extent of his favour and power. He addressed often and familiarly the Queen in public ; he equalled the greatest and most opulent subjects in the richness of his apparel and the number of his attendants. In all his behaviour he discovered an overweening arrogance and the intoxication of prosperity, and he retaliated the indignation which such indiscretion provoked, by an insolence that belied the solidity of his judgment, and that acuteness which, in matters of business, gave him always the ascendancy.

Besides the obnoxious ostentation of Rizzio in his public conduct, there was a sinister method in his management of private concerns, which daily became more and more manifest, and which rendered his integrity greatly questionable. No man saw the defects of Darnley's character clearer ; but he appeared to lend himself to the imprudence of that misguided prince, with a flexibility which too evidently showed that it was with the design of ruling him through his passions. In this, however, he was only acting with that dissimulation of which he was universally suspected. He had early perceived that the weakness and inconsistency of Darnley afforded no hold by which he could rule him to his purposes ; and in consequence,

while he seemed sedulous to indulge his humours, he was only ingeniously contributing to widen the breach between him and the Queen. The incident recorded in the foregoing chapter respecting the conduct of Southennan towards the King, after the insult to Adelaide, was the first in which the Italian exerted his subtlety.

So long as the Count Dufroy remained at Court, the King, apprized by the demeanour of Southennan of the resistance he would encounter by persevering in his designs against Adelaide, abstained from any farther open molestation ; but the restraint which he put upon himself only served to exasperate his intentions. He complained to Rizzio of the audacity, as he described it, of Southennan, and threatened, more for revenge than for his admiration of Adelaide, to accomplish his purposes. Adherence, however, either to principle or to system was beyond his power, and thus it came to pass, immediately after the departure of the Count, of whom he stood more in awe than of Southennan, that he again more openly addressed himself to Adelaide, at a time too when even greater licentiousness would have been more wary. The period was fixed for her marriage with Southennan, and it was during the preparations that Darnley again ventured to divulge his repulsed and dishonourable desires.

CHAPTER XXV.

" Dangerous conceits are in their nature poisons,
Which at the first are scarce found to distaste,
But with a little act upon the blood,
Burn like the mines of sulphur."

OTHELLO.

SOME few days after the Count Dufroy had left the kingdom, the Queen happened, from indisposition, to keep her chamber, and being somewhat depressed in spirits, she requested particularly the attendance of Adelaide. It might have been thought, considering the tone of her spirits, that she would have preferred a more lively companion ; but there is an affinity between melancholy and thoughtfulness, and from the pensive character of Adelaide her Majesty conceived she was

more likely to derive relief, than from her other ladies, who were all of a gayer temperament.

On this occasion she was surprised when Adelaide entered the room, to observe that instead of her wonted mild serenity, she was flushed with a degree of passion approximating to anger, so strong that it could neither be controlled nor concealed.

The Queen took, however, no notice of her emotion, but began to speak of inconsiderable topics; and for some time, endeavouring to rally her self-possession, Adelaide sustained the conversation without any very obvious absence of mind; but still occasionally she fell into brief fits of abstraction, and more than once with difficulty refrained from weeping.

"What has befallen you?" said the Queen, affecting cheerfulness, "I would advise you to reserve your tears until after the wedding. You may then have occasion for more than them all."

This was said playfully, but Adelaide knew it had in it much of sincerity; for although her Majesty had not then breathed any complaint of the reckless conduct of Darnley, it had been manifest that she was sensible both of its tendency and extent. Instead of replying, Adelaide gave vent to her tears.

"How!" exclaimed Mary, "what is this! What indeed could have caused these tears?"

Adelaide, relieved by her weeping, then said, "I grieve that I must leave your Majesty; I can no longer remain here."

The Queen, surprised at this unexpected information, with her characteristic quickness, discerned that something extraordinary must have occurred, and eagerly inquired what had happened to occasion the adoption of such a resolution so suddenly.

The reply of Adelaide, without being exactly evasive, was intended to lead the attention of the Queen to some other subject.

"It is necessary," said she, "that I should have time for some domestic arrangements, and I have thought it advisable to place myself either with the Lady Kilburnie, or Southennan's mother, until the wedding preparations are complete."

The Queen was struck with this answer, and steadily looked at her, saying,

"Oh! that is discreet. But why these tears? It may be they flow at the idea, shall I say, of leaving me; but that anger, Adelaide, comes of no grief. What wrong have you endured?"

"Wrong!" exclaimed Adelaide, startled at the manner in which her Majesty had so keenly detected the true nature of her agitation.

"Yes, wrong! and who dare by look, gesture, or intention, vex you here," said the Queen, with an energy in her voice that betokened the exercise of resentment.

"I implore your Majesty to heed not my accidental caprice."

"Say not so; call it by a fitter epithet. Ah! Adelaide, I can guess what you are afraid to tell;" and with these words the Queen rose abruptly from her seat, and in strong perturbation walked several times across the room, while Adelaide sat trembling and alarmed, lest she had expressed more than she was conscious of having said.

The Queen soon recovered her self-command, and resuming her seat, smiled, but with a cast of sadness, as she again, with affected gayety, observed,

"Our lots are curiously ravelled. I had the misfortune to mar your first love; have the malicious stars put it in your power to avenge it? I ask you no more questions, but as I have more than once suspected, the King regards you——"

"Alas! alas! it is no fault of mine," interrupted Adelaide, with impassioned earnestness.

"I know it," said the Queen, "would it were so. Would that I could blame you—then might I hope the faithlessness, for which I fear there is no cure, would be dispelled by removing the cause. No, Adelaide, I need no protestation to assure me of your innocence. Even in his guilt I perceive but the fatality which pursues our blood."

While they were thus speaking, the King came into the room, and on seeing Adelaide there, and in tears, he stood for a moment in visible consternation. He at once concluded that she had complained of his freedom, and he saw by the proud and elevated expression of the Queen's countenance, her opinion of his delinquency. At first he felt inclined to treat the affair jocularly, but with that lack of propriety, which was the very habitude of his mind, he put on an offended air, and began to vindicate himself, believing that he had been accused.

"I assure your Majesty," was his first expression, "that this lady is either too cunning, or too sensitive."

The eyes of Adelaide flashed with indignation; and foreseeing the folly into which he was falling, she immediately retired.

"In what way?" inquired the Queen, with some degree of coolness and reserve.

"I see," replied Darnley, "that she has been frightening your Majesty's jealousy by complaining——"

"Complaining! of what?" said the Queen.

"Oh, I met her in the gallery, and complimenting her on the bridal beauty of her appearance, would have saluted her. She spurned, as if it were some dreadful violation——"

"She has told me none of that," replied the Queen, with increasing coldness, which Darnley observing, said petulantly,

"Oh, jealousy is not to be tamed by telling the truth."

"Were there not more offence in your rudeness than you have described, I know not that it would furnish much cause for jealousy; but since your Majesty is aware that, in what you have done, offence has been felt, it may be as well to give her no farther cause to complain: in the mean time I must suffer some inconvenience by this lightness. Adelaide has determined to retire to the country, at a time when I can ill spare her."

The countenance of Darnley changed. He was conscious that although he had described an outline of the incident which had occurred between Adelaide and himself in the gallery, yet that the colouring and character of the transaction were wanting. He, however, still affected to make light of it; and said he had no doubt that, notwithstanding the anger he might have provoked, he and Adelaide would soon again be good friends.

"If you think so," said the Queen, dryly, "you should lose no time till you have satisfied Southennan that your momentary freedom was innocent and harmless."

Darnley, conscious that it was far different, reddened with passion, and with an unroyal vehemence, cried,

"Has she dared to speak of that?"

"Of what?" inquired the Queen, "What more have you done, that you should say, 'has she dared to tell?'"

"Am I a slave," cried Darnley, almost hoarse with rage, "that I must answer for all I do, and frame excuses for the misconceptions of silliness, or the misrepresentations of malice?"

"Let this controversy end here," said the Queen; "it has done, as yet, no harm, but to dwell upon it would make it do so."

"Must I then tamely submit to be so traduced?"

"Verily, Darnley," said the Queen, with a smile, intended to appease his weak wrath, "if we argue more on this mat-

ter, we shall be soon as man and wife are on such occasions, both in the wrong. I am willing to pardon you, and even without exacting any promise, to trust you will hereafter prove a better boy."

"Pardon!" echoed Darnley, with an accent of scorn.

"Come, come; let us end this altercation. I am willing, as a pledge of my hope in you for the future, to prefer your version of the story to that of Adelaide; for, in sooth, I have had no story from her at all, and had you kept your own counsel, I dare say I should have been none the wiser of any thing she might have told." And, in saying thus much, she laughed, and offered him her hand in token of reconciliation; which, with that gallantry he could sometimes assume, and glad to escape without farther animadversion, he jocundly accepted.

CHAPTER XXVI.

* With light heart stole he on his evil way,
And light of heart hath vengeance stole on after him."

THE PICCOLOMINI.

DURING the interval between the doom of Chatelard and the Queen's marriage, when Southennan and Adelaide again made their appearance at Court, some change had taken place in the household of the former. Baldy had proved himself rather more of an intrigant than pleased his master; he had moreover become more propugnacious than consorted with his station; and, above all, he had ingratiated himself with Mrs. Marjory to such a degree, that he did not leave Edinburgh with his master, but pitched his tent up the nine-pair-of-stairs, as her husband. He had, however, been so long a faithful though never a very agreeable servant, that Southennan remained his patron, and made their house on his return again his home.

Father Jerome returned to the Place, as the house of Southennan was called, it could not be said much disappointed at finding the Protestants exercised an ascendancy over the Queen, far beyond what the Catholics had expected; for he had soon seen that his own party pursued with too much avidity the temporal interests of the Churchmen, rather than the spiritual concerns of the church. He was dissatisfied with the conduct of

his brethren; and being old and infirm, obeyed, as he said himself, the admonition of the oracle of decaying nature, to retire from the conflicts and controversies of the world.

Hughoc in the mean time had also undergone some change of character. There are few things more interesting than the four states and stages in the progress of human life. First, when the child begins to observe, and has not acquired discrimination enough to discern the true from the false, and judges altogether by appearances. Second, when all things appear to the tyro equally deserving of watchfulness and distrust. The transition from this state into that of the more manly is often rapid, and not so obvious in its process or progress as other moral mutations, but it is no less decided; for in it the full character of the man is evolved. The fourth change is the most impressive: when the adventurer feels the coming on of infirmity, and renounces hopes and ambition. But we have no time for metaphysics; all that we intended was only to apprise our readers that, although Hughoc still retained much of his original peculiarities, he was less subject to wonderment than when he was first introduced to the reader; but a more adroit and ingenious servant. He had fewer marvels to relate to his master, and did not think that even the most extraordinary he met with, were always worthy of being related. But to resume our story.

In the course of the evening after the colloquy described between Mary and Darnley, he happened to fall in with one of the King's servants, then in quest of Auchenbrae who had returned from England at the time of the royal nuptials. Recollecting his former adventures with him, and the entanglement between his concerns and those of his master and of Knock-whinnie, he endeavoured to ascertain the purpose for which that personage was wanted, without, however, in any way explaining his suspicion that it could be for no good; for by this time the character of Darnley was known among the menials, and that he was addicted to dissolute companions, and evaded the society of the more respectable courtiers. Thus it happened that although Hughoc did not affect to take any interest in the errand of his companion, having then no particular duty to perform, he walked with him, conversing on indifferent topics. After visiting all the taverns to which the courtiers and other gentlemen were in the practice of resorting, they at last found Auchenbrae, who, on receiving his Majesty's message, went immediately to the Palace.

Hughoc, whose constitutional curiosity was, by his advance

towards years of discretion, sharpened with suspicion, could not resist the desire of seeing the end of this adventure ; for although in its circumstances no way remarkable, still something arising from the lateness of the hour, the imperative nature of the mandate, and the regret of the King's servant that his Majesty should have any thing to do with such a tainted character, led him to apprehend that it was of more importance than it seemed ; and in consequence he resolved to watch the issue : so returning back to the Palace, he waited at the portal until Auchenbrae came out.

It would be difficult to assign any particular cause for the curiosity by which he was incited, but the haste and eagerness in the pace and manner with which Auchenbrae returned towards the city, justified the suspicion of something extraordinary being in his business ; and accordingly Hughoc followed him at a short distance through many narrow lanes and dark wynds to an inn in the Grassmarket, frequented by the west-country carriers.

He followed him into the house ; and, under the pretext of expecting something, inquired for the Glasgow carrier. Auchenbrae being in the house before him, looked at Hughoc, who affected not to recognise him ; and his countenance underwent a slight change at the recognition. This circumstance, momentary as it was, convinced Hughoc that whatever was the machination then in hand, it had some reference to his master. As the Glasgow carrier was not come in, but was every minute expected, Hughoc sat down, pretending to wait for him ; while Auchenbrae made some inquiries for another, known by the name of Rough Tam, the Linlithgow messenger. The answer he received was to the same effect ; but Auchenbrae, instead of sitting down to wait—perhaps owing to some sense of the propriety belonging to his birth, not choosing to mingle with the coarse guests then present, went out and walked in front of the house.

The Glasgow carrier at last arrived, and Hughoc, on seeing him, inquired for a valise which he pretended to expect ; but, Willie Bell, like others of his calling, had no very distinct recollection of having brought any such thing ; and in those days way-bills had not been invented. Hughoc, in consequence of observing himself watched by Auchenbrae, said he would wait until the wain was unloaded, but the carrier being averse, on account of the lateness of the hour, to disturb his load that night, some altercation arose between them, during which Rough Tam, on horseback, came in.

As soon as he had alighted, Auchenbrae took hold of his arm with his hand, and drew him aside for a minute or two, during which he spoke to him in a whisper. Tam, at the conclusion, replied aloud, "Vera weel, as soon as I hae stabled my mare I'll come to you."

Auchenbrae then went away, but on this occasion Hughoc did not follow. He, however, left the house and stood in a dark close-mouth opposite, determined to discover the appointed rendezvous, and to make the acquaintance of Rough Tam.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"Where's he that will unravel,
This tangle, ever tangling more and more."

SCHILLER.

WHEN Rough Tam came out of the hostel to keep his appointment, Southennan's man followed him at some distance, until he entered one of the wynds which led from the Cowgate to the High-street.

About half way up the wynd was a public house, distinguished by a paper lantern over the door, into which the Linlithgow messenger entered, but Hughoc slowly reconnoitred it, and cautiously passed. At first, as the door was open, he was inclined to go in, but on second thoughts he deemed it advisable to ascertain previously the character of the house.—Accordingly, he walked up to the entrance of the wynd from the High-street, where observing a cadie, as the street messengers in Edinburgh are called, he immediately made up to him.

"I think," said he, "this is a lonesome closs. Surely that change-house, wi' the bowet aboon the door, canna hae meikle custom."

The cadie replied that he was much mistaken, for that it was a well-frequented house, by what he called disabled gentry, that is, persons of more pretence than means.

"I'm thinking," said Hughoc, "they would rather marvel if they saw the like o' me seeking a refreshment there."

The cadie, however, assured him that he would be made very welcome; "for no man is allowed to come in that's of the lower orders: it's keepit by a discreet wife."

Upon this Hughoc went back, and bravely entered : seeing no person in the public room, and knowing that Rough Tam was in the house, he inquired if he could not have a private room for himself—"I hae," said he, "a cousin and a brother that may come before the supper's ready."

Martha Eccles, the landlady, a jocose little old woman, readily acceded to his request, telling him, however, that the only spare apartment was inner to another, where a friend was waiting for a gentleman. Hughoc concluded this must be Rough Tam, and that Auchenbrae had not yet joined him. Accordingly he desired to be shown into that apartment, and in passing through to it, he saw he was right in his conjecture.

Scarcely was he seated when he heard Rough Tam joined by another, and peeping through a chink in the partition, he saw it was Auchenbrae, and that Rough Tam apprized him by a sign to speak low, lest they might be overheard. In consequence their conversation, for some time, was inaudible ; but as they continued and became more earnest, they spoke plainer, until at last Hughoc gathered that the business in which they were engaged, related to something to be conveyed on the following night secretly to a certain house in Linlithgow.

"You will have the horses ready," said Auchenbrae, "an hour after gloaming, and make the best haste you can to the shore of Leith, where you will find a boat in which you will place her."

"Whisht, whisht!" said Tam, to repress the conversational tone and accent which his companion was inadvertently using. What followed was, owing to this admonition, spoken in so low a voice that it was indistinct to the listener. In the course, however, of a few minutes, Auchenbrae again forgot himself, and said, loud enough to be heard,

"And when he goes off, which the sooner he does the better, warn him to tell the old woman to have her house quiet, and to take nobody in but the gentleman, and to treat the lady with all manner of respect."

"I doubt," said Tam, with a half laugh, also forgetting the risk he ran of the listener, "ye're at your auld deevilry, Auchenbrae. Wha's the leddy, and wha's the d——d wuddy bird that ye would hae me to put my thrapple in a girn for?"

"Hush!" cried Auchenbrae, recovering his recollection by hearing the eave's dropper cough.

For a considerable time they again talked in a whisper, but becoming again more in earnest, Tam forgot himself, and said,

"Deil ae plack less, Auchenbrae. Ye'll gie me five-and-

twenty merk, counted down clean siller, aneath your thumb in my loof, or I move a toe in this black job—for it's a black job: And what's mair, if ye dinna, Auchenbrae, I'll send the swine through't, and tell the Lord Provost o' your plot. Five-and-twenty merk, Auchenbrae, shall be my erles before I quit this house this night, and the wage when the wark's dune, d——n me, but it shall be a sappy ane; for as this is no ane o' your ain debauches, I hae a guess it's for somebody that can pay for't."

Auchenbrae again admonished him by eye and finger, to speak more guardedly, and they again whispered, so that Hughoc heard no more; for at this juncture, the landlady brought in his supper, and Auchenbrae parted from his coadjutor, saying,

"In the morning, depend upon it, you shall have it."

Rough Tam did not follow him, but said to the old woman, that he would be glad to have something likewise for supper, being hungry after his journey. In this good fortune again smiled on Hughoc's purposes, and he dexterously turned the accident to account; for in retiring the landlady left the door open, which enabled him to hear what Tam said, and he invited him to partake with him, observing that it might be some time before another supper could be got ready, and that there was enough to serve both. The invitation was readily accepted, and Tam, moving with his stoup of drink into the inner room, soon made himself at ease.

"I think," said Hughoc to him, "I hae seen that gentleman that left you when Lucky brought in the provender?"

"Nae doubt but ye may, and make nae brag o' where it was; for it is as like to hae been wi' the hangman as wi' Mess John. He's an outstraplous deevil's claw as ever gaed up the black stairs o' a tolbooth; but he's no an ill fallow to do an ill turn for: in that respect, I maun say, he has the heels o' auld Clootie, whom the mair ye serve the waur he pays."

"Dear me," replied Hughoc, "I thought him a most quiet-spoken man."

"There was a reason for that," said Tam: "maybe what we were pactioning was something that the heavens shouldna' hear, nor man either."

"It's no my business to scald my lips in other folk's kail: but let me help you to this fish. Oh! by the bye, surely this isna the Auchenbrae that was guilty some years ago o' the straemash wi' Knockwhinnie's leddy: now I mind him very weel: he's a dreadfu' thief o' other men's wives, they say!"

"And he's no ill," replied Tam, "at whudding awa' wi' their daughters likewise. I would be nane surprised if Knockwhinnie fand that or lang, to his cost likewise."

"I doubt," said Hughoc, "that 'll be a supple trick; for she's well herded, and is to be married very soon to that west country gallant, Southennan."

"Aye," said Tam; "a west country gallant. Wha can it be that would fling him o'er the brigg?"

As they were thus speaking, Tam's countenance suddenly altered, and he muttered, "What a senseless clavering tongue is in my mouth!" And, as if he suddenly recollected something he had neglected, he said "Deevils! young lad, I'm forgetting mysel': I ought no to be here at this time; sae dinna take it ill that I run awa'. On some other night, if ye'll come to where I put up, I'll gie you baith a tappit-hen and a skirlie-pan."

And so saying he hastily departed, and Hughoc, without lingering long behind, settled his "lawing," and hastened home to his master with the tale of his suspicions and discoveries.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"We subalterns have no will of our own:
The free, the mighty man alone may listen
To the fair impulse of his human nature."

COLERIDGE'S *WALLENSTEIN*.

AT an early hour next morning Southennan roused Knockwhinnie, and related to him what his servant had discovered, and his conjectures as to the object of the meditated abduction. There could, indeed, be no question as to this point, nor as to the author of the machination; so that the only thing they had to consider was, some mode of frustrating the profligate intentions of Darnley, a measure which neither of them was at any time very well qualified to arrange; Knockwhinnie by his impetuosity, and our hero by his dislike of sinister stratagems.

After some earnest and anxious discussion Southennan proposed that he should see Rizzio on the subject; for by this time, short as the interval had been since the royal marriage, it was notorious to all the Court that a breach was widening

between the Queen and King ; so obviously, indeed, that the Italian, who had for a long period been constantly ingratiating himself with the former, and who had acquired great influence with her, was manifestly withdrawing, as it might be justly said, his patronage from the latter.

They proceeded to the palace together : Knockwhinnie went to his daughter, who reoccupied her old apartments, and Southennan in quest of Rizzio, whom he found alone and in visible perplexity, with papers and newly opened despatches before him.

"I am glad to see you," exclaimed the Italian ; I but have just sent a servant to request you to come to me. These papers concern you in some degree, and the business is urgent." After some farther preliminary explanation he continued, without waiting for any remark : "Last night we had letters from the Low Countries ; and among other strange matters, they report, that a clandestine correspondence has been discovered to have existed for some time between certain leaders of the Protestants in Rotterdam, and some of the Scottish lords of the congregation in the west, which has for its object an universal union and combination against the Catholics ; but the names of the Scottish conspirators have not been ascertained. In consequence of these advices, orders were given to stop all letters directed to the west country, on whomsoever found, addressed to persons of any note connected with the Protestants. Among others, one of the King's servants was stopped, and, in despite of resistance, this letter was taken from him. It is without signature ; but written by some person in the King's confidence, and your name is mentioned in it, with a caution to be watchful of you : and yet, though the business to which it relates is unintelligible to me, it must be important. Can you give me any cue to it ?"

Southennan read the letter, and at once declared that he had called on the very business to which it plainly referred. He then related the substance of the story received from his servant, and observed, that the writer was evidently instructing the person to whom it was addressed to prepare for the reception of the King.

While they were considering the probability of Darnley being engaged in such a derogatory business, notice was brought in that their Majesties intended, that afternoon, to visit Linlithgow, for a few days, and that Rizzio was to follow them as early as possible. Had there been any doubt in the mind of Southennan as to the King's part in the plot, it would

have been settled by this sudden and unaccountable movement. [The Italian, too, was perfectly persuaded of the fact, and perhaps felt sincerely the indignation he expressed against Darnley, not only for the evident contempt in which he held the esteem and affection of the Queen, but the criminality of his intents on the honour of Adelaide. For however lax his own principles were in the prosecution of his ambition in all other things, which did not interfere with the gratification of that great passion, he was not without commendable merit, but was even susceptible of friendly attachments.

Southennan, in the flush of his anger, suggested that the machinations should be exposed to her Majesty.

"No: not yet," said Rizzio; "neither his weakness nor wickedness are sufficiently known to the public to render so decided a step prudent; nor is the Queen yet so sensible of his unworthiness as to make the story acceptable. He must be allowed to stain himself with darker hues, before we can venture to direct her indignation against him."

Southennan shuddered at the cold craft of the observation, and experienced something like a sentiment of antipathy suddenly prompting him to retire. The Italian, however, perceiving that he had unguardedly produced a stronger impression than he had intended, added,

"It is harsh to speak so of any man; but the King is one of those sort of characters who cannot be improved—there is not material enough about him to sustain a change: his passions and self-will are too vehement to admit of neutrality: he cannot choose but to do evil—it is the natural secretion of all the faculties of his mind and body."

"And yet," replied Southennan, "his humanity is largely praised, and this licentiousness seems but of recent growth."

"Of recent detection," said Rizzio. "His blamelessness, before he was exalted to share the throne, was not of virtue, but of cowardice. He durst not do what he would have done: and, as to his humanity—look to him when he shall have cause for revenge!"

"What would you, then, advise me to do?"

"Get Adelaide removed from the Court, without delay, this very day."

"But in what will that make her safer from the designs of one who hath neither will nor wish to control his desires, however vicious or impure?"

"Let no such apprehension trouble you: men so weak, fortunately for those whom their power would enable them to

injure, are the mere agents of impulses—out of sight out of mind, is the tenour of their life. Had the weak the same constancy in purpose as the strong, fools would rule the world. No, Southennan, take Adelaide away, and his passion will not outlast the present moon, which, three nights ago, passed the full."

"But what may be said to the Queen?"

"Excuse it afterward. It is often easier to justify a fault which has been committed, than to give a satisfactory reason for a good deed before it is done. Their Majesties will go, as you have heard, in the afternoon, to Linlithgow: while they are absent, cannot you, with her father, convey Adelaide where you will—to England or France?"

"There is at least, discretion in what you advise; but it is a hard condition to leave our country, merely because we may not venture to cope with an aggressor."

"Hush!" interposed Rizzio. "Your iron barons will in due season find out some method of redressing the wrong. But we speak too freely: and were it not for the duty I owe the Queen, I would be more your friend in this matter. Take my advice, and leave the issue to fortune."

Southennan soon retired, but without any clear purpose in view. It seemed a bootless stratagem to remove Adelaide only from Court, when the King's power was spread through the kingdom; and the thought of conveying her abroad begat ideas dangerous to fealty.

From Rizzio he went to confer with Knockwhinnie, and to communicate what had passed, as well as what the Italian had suggested; but as he approached the door of Adelaide's apartment, and heard him laughing within, the sound grated on his ear, and his feelings discordantly jangled, to such a degree, that he hesitated to advance: perhaps he would even have retired without seeking admittance, had not the door been then opened, and Knockwhinnie come out.

CHAPTER XXIX.

“ The Emperor
Hath dealt with me amiss ; and if I would
I could repay him with usurious interest
For the evil he hath done me.”

COLERIDGE'S *WALLENSTEIN*.

KNOCKWHINNIE, who was in a cheerful humour, would have returned into his daughter's apartment with Southennan ; but the latter, who was serious and troubled, declined the proposal, and they returned up into the city together.

“ I suspect,” said Knockwhinnie, as they came out of the Palace, “ we have been frightening ourselves with an imagination. Their Majesties go, in the afternoon, to Linlithgow ; and Adelaide, with the Lady Mary Livingstone, follows them in the evening.”

“ Follow in the evening !” exclaimed Southennan ; “ that, at least, is unusual. The country is open ; the road is rough ; it will be late before they arrive.”

“ What says the Italian ?” inquired Knockwhinnie, in some degree impressed with the seriousness of his companion.

“ Nothing to change my apprehensions : but rather to strengthen them. We have to deal with a man whose wickedness is not so bad as his weakness ; or rather, of whom it may be said, that he is wicked because he is weak. Rizzio advises, and with good reasons for the advice, that Adelaide should at once be removed beyond his reach. Why then should we, for matters of idle ceremony, postpone our marriage ? Let it take place without delay.”

Knockwhinnie made no reply, but walked on for some time thoughtfully, and then he observed,

“ But in what will she be safer from his baseness by becoming your wife.”

“ I have felt that scalding thought,” replied Southennan with energy ; “ and the reflection that he is the King scorches me. Her Majesty can alone effectually interpose ; and yet, to ask her protection were to put scorpions beneath her pillow. But something must be done, and speedily : let us return to

Adelaide ; she must not go to Linlithgow—some device must be contrived to prevent her."

The earnestness with which Southennan was animated had its natural sympathetic effect on Knockwhinnie. The lightness with which he had left his daughter was dissipated ; he became persuaded that she stood in greater jeopardy than he was willing to believe ; and with his characteristic temerity, resolved on the instant to remove her from the Queen's service. But Southennan, though equally anxious to see her in safety, more judiciously considered, that it could not be done without coming to some explanation with the Queen, an impracticable step without hazarding her Majesty's peace of mind, and without precipitating a domestic wreck, which, however obviously inevitable, honour and duty alike called upon them as men and subjects to avert.

On arriving at the portal of the Palace, they saw the King, with a numerous train of his associates, preparing to ride out. The grooms held the horses ; but, contrary to his custom on similar occasions, his Majesty, instead of mounting at once, lingered as if for some one expected ; a circumstance which was noticed by the spectators as an unwonted forgetfulness of his own dignity—and it was indeed so ; for presently Auchenbrae made his appearance, accompanied by a rude, coarse, athletic clown, cleaned and trimmed for the occasion—Rough Tam.

Auchenbrae, leaving him a little behind, went directly towards his Majesty, with whom his business was soon despatched : it consisted but of a few words, and in the King giving him his purse.

This brief scene, from its publicity, perhaps, seemed to those who had no suspicion of its object, to lack something in propriety ; still it was not so to such a degree as to attract particular notice ; for those who are accustomed to act in the presence of servants and attendants are less considerate of time and place in the management of their affairs than the rest of mankind ; they speak louder and freer, and stand less in awe of being observed or overheard ; and they enjoy, in consequence, the advantage of being regarded by their witnesses as transacting but light matters when often engaged with the gravest.

The father and lover of Adelaide made no remark on what they saw take place ; but looking seriously at each other, mended their pace to avoid the royal cavalcade ; for the King mounted immediately on giving his purse to Auchenbrae, and

came forward, as it were to meet them. As it was not exactly the course he was required to take, for he never rode into the city, they both felt an unaccountable persuasion that he was actuated in the deviation, by some motive which had reference to them : nor, indeed, were they allowed to doubt, for in passing them, his countenance, in returning their salutations, betrayed an unseemly exultation, as if he rejoiced in some triumph. To Southennan this was even offensively manifested, and to such a degree, that it made him tremble with indignation, and answer his Majesty's sneer with the utmost scorn that he could throw into his features.

Darnley for a moment seemed disposed to demand an explanation ; he pulled up his bridle, his eyes flashing with rage : but almost instantly he turned his horse's head, and rode off in the direction he ought originally to have taken.

But although this challenge of scorn and defiance did not occupy many seconds, it yet had been sufficiently conspicuous. The attendants one and all turned their eyes fiercely on Southennan ; some of them even checked their horses ; but on seeing the King ride forward, they alertly followed. Something of tumult and turbulence was visibly among them ; they often looked back, suddenly gathering into groups, and as quickly again spreading themselves apart.

"We shall hear of this," said Knockwhinnie.

"I think not," replied Southennan. "Had he been conscious that he durst resent it, he would have done it on the spot. But enough has passed to warn me to withdraw from Edinburgh. I can endure much for the Queen's sake ; but that fool's folly has been so familiar to me before his promotion, that I am unable to repress my contempt now, when he may no longer be questioned ; for Kings have not only long beaks but many claws."

Knockwhinnie made no answer. He walked on in visible perturbation ; sometimes he threw a sidelong glance at Southennan ; at others a wrathful mutter hoarsely escaped from him ; and twice or thrice in the sweep and whirl of the inward storm, he was carried several steps wildly forward, till Southennan was obliged to lay hold of him by the arm and remind him where they were, and how many eyes were around and upon them.

CHAPTER XXX.

" My mind misgives
Some consequence still hanging on the stars."

SHAKESPEARE.

In the mean time, although the Queen had affected to make light of her consort's indiscretion, if an epithet so mild may be applied to conduct so base, it had deeply impressed her heart; and though she felt that the sacrifice would be severe to herself, she yet determined to remove Adelaide as quickly as possible beyond the reach of danger, but in such a manner as to prevent it from becoming a topic of remark. With this view, she had proposed the excursion to Linlithgow, where the Lady Kilburnie, the grandmother of Adelaide, resided, intending to leave her there.

The immediate pretext for the journey was the beauty of the weather; and the King had consented to it with unwonted readiness; for it accorded with the arrangements he had planned with Auchenbrae for the abduction. But the best-concerted schemes are often frustrated by simple and ordinary accidents.

The day, which had opened calm and clear, began towards noon to be overcast. The wind arose to a tempest. Travelers were driven to shelter. The King's riding party was forced home; and deluges of rain, accompanied with thunder and lightning, prohibited for that afternoon the intended journey, and afforded time to Southennan and Knockwhinnie to digest the means of better defeating the machination. But that respect for the tranquillity of the Queen which induced them to proceed more warily than either of them was naturally, under the circumstances, inclined to do, was not experienced by others who had stronger reasons to feel it.

The King, immediately on his return to the Palace, gave orders that Southennan should no longer be seen there; and, under the pretext of allaying the jealousy by which he supposed the Queen was disturbed, he suggested to her that Adelaide should be permitted to retire from her attendance during the

short interval that had to elapse before the expiry of the time appointed for her marriage.

The order and the suggestion, both arising from the displeasure with which he had tacitly menaced Southennan, and had in turn been challenged, appeared sudden and inexplicable to the Queen ; but as the latter was in unison with her own wishes and intentions, she readily assented to its propriety, without expressing either surprise at the haste, or asking explanation of the motive.

Meanwhile, Hughoc had not been idle ; his imagination had pretty well filled up with specious probabilities the hiatus in his information respecting the designs of Auchenbrae, and the co-operation of Rough Tam ; and during the storm, when all had been compelled to seek shelter, he contrived to find his refuge in the carrier's quarters, the house which the latter commonly frequented. Some degree of acquaintanceship having been already established between them by their meeting on the preceding evening, this seeming accident enabled him to cultivate it into more intimacy ; for Tam, as his nickname implied, was a noisy, out-spoken, rattling fellow ; intrepid, adroit, and in his best humour and spirits when he had a hazardous adventure in hand, and possessed, if the expression may be allowed, a natural affinity to the peculiar qualities for which Hughoc, now grown a smart and shrewd lad, was distinguished among the young men of his own grade.

As they sat conversing together until the rain abated, Tam was too full of his enterprise to withstand the delight of letting his new companion know how well he was thought of by his superiors. Hughoc, who was naturally more cautious, carefully abstained from talking of himself ; but he drew him on with the help of the ale before them, into farther disclosures, until he had acquired with his previous knowledge and suspicions, a tolerably distinct conception of the whole plot, which, however, the unexpected determination of the Queen to visit Linlithgow had for that day disconcerted.

After having acquired this information, Hughoc, on rejoining his master, related the particulars of what had passed, and also his persuasion, that although a brief suspension of the design had taken place, the earliest opportunity would undoubtedly be seized to carry it into effect. Thus, after maturely considering every thing, it appeared to Southennan that no other option was left to secure the safety of Adelaide, but to follow the advice of Rizzio, by carrying her out of the

kingdom, either to England or to France ; and the urgency of the case scarcely admitted of time for the necessary preparations.

This unhappy and perplexing state of things was ill calculated to appease the energy of that antipathy which Darnley had provoked in the bosom of our hero, who felt that to be forced to leave his native land on account of the criminal intents, too openly pursued against the honour of his bride, was a tyranny of the most hateful kind. It exasperated his dislike, which had been constantly increasing, until it partook of enmity, inflamed with rage, and betrayed him often, when speaking to others of the King, into expressions of contempt and anger at variance with the habitual prudence and equanimity of his character.

With Knockwhinnie the same cause produced a different effect ; although from his temerity, it was rather to have been expected that it would have goaded him into a fiercer degree of resentment.

With his wonted rashness in decision, he concluded that there was no alternative but only to leave the country, and accordingly he began, without reference to what Southennan might determine, to prepare for departing with Adelaide.

The troubles of the lovers were thus augmented ; all things seemed to work together against them, insomuch that their union appeared to themselves as the hope of a dream destined never to be realized. A weariness of spirit fell upon them both, and Southennan, who had loved so long and fervently, began at times to yield to discouraging anticipations. This despondency was deepened by an incident, which, though in itself trivial, was yet calculated, by the mood into which so many vexations had thrown him, to multiply his anxieties.

Among others to whom Knockwhinnie complained in confidence of Darnley's libertine stratagems against his daughter, was the Earl of Morton, whose respect for the King was neither strong nor sincere, and whose jealousy of Rizzio's influence with the Queen had continued to quicken from the first moment that he suspected she held a correspondence by him with the princes in the papal interest.

With considerable natural sagacity, Morton, like many better men connected with affairs of government, was too apt to ascribe the conduct of others to craftier motives and more sinister intentions, than men of far less integrity would have done. Bred up for public employments, it had been early instilled in him to estimate those with whom he might have

occasion to deal, by a suspicious rule ; and thus, alike by disposition, habit, and principle, he invidiously judged of mankind. It could not, however, be said that he did injustice to individuals ; for with him the application of the rule was universal ; but, by allowing no exceptions, he often discovered himself in error when he thought mistake, was least likely to occur ; and so it happened in the present instance. For after listening to the grievance of which his old friend Knockwhinnie complained, he conjectured that Darnley was instigated and assisted by Rizzio. Distrustful of both, it may be said hating them alike, he saw the machination through the coloured and distorting medium of his own passion and prejudice, as a combination of circumstances contrived by the Italian to magnify his merit in the eyes of the King ; and, reasoning upon that misconception, he involved the fortunes of the lovers with greater difficulties.

CHAPTER XXXI.

"Auspicious aspect ! fateful in conjunction,
At length the mighty three corradiate."

SCHILLER.

AFTER Knockwhinnie had explained to the Earl of Morton the different occasions of Darnley's unjustifiable declarations of attachment to Adelaide, and the discoveries which had been made of his designs, the Earl remained some time ruminating, with his head drooping over his breast, and his fore-finger on his upper lip, as if untying to himself the knot of some doubtful question ; at last he said,

"It's as plain to me as a pikestaff, Knockwhinnie, that this corky-headed lad, Darnley, whom the Queen in her fainness has sae rashly lifted up to sit beside her, will prove not only a thorn in the flesh to herself, but a knife in the thrapple o' Scotland. Puir auld ewie, is she ay to be sprawling on her back in the ditch, wi' her feet caught in a tether. But, Knockwhinnie, I'll see to the bottom o' this. That yellow loon, Dauvit Richie, has a finger in the pie, I could wager my right neive on't ; and if the waur come to the waur, we maun cow him ; for he makes himself sae necessary to the King's follies,

that he's little short o' being the King himsel', what between the power it gies him, and the use he makes o' the flatteries and fletchings wherewith he beglammours her Majesty's naturally gleg understanding."

"I rather suspect, my lord," replied Knockwhinnie, "that in this matter Rizzio has no part. My old enemy Auchendrae seems to be the prime agent."

"It's little ye ken about the wily Italian. Do ye think he is such a novice in plots and stratagems as to let himsel' be seen? Na, na, he works the wires, and the world sees only the louping puppets, that jig and reel as he jerks. But I'll go this minute to him, the wuddy bird; he has been o'er lang among us; and this matter, weel handlet, may physic the land o' him."

Accordingly, Morton went at once to Rizzio, whom he found in some degree of agitation, in consequence of the King having peevishly accused him of entertaining a disloyal partiality for Southennan, to the frustration of his hopes with Adelaide. The accusation being unfounded, Rizzio defended himself, which provoked the heady and intemperate Darnley; who, at all times ready to indulge his spleen and resentment, parted from him with a determination to require his dismissal from the Queen's service.

It was, however, only in the word that the Italian was innocent; for he had watched the progress of the King's infidelity with eagerness, and anticipated by the haste and recklessness with which it was pursued, that it could not be much longer concealed from her Majesty; for he was not aware that she already had heard of it. His interest in the business had reference only to his own views; he certainly had no wish that Adelaide should become a victim, while he thought that by her such a rupture might be effected between the Queen and her consort, as would materially strengthen his ascendancy. No visit could, therefore, be more inauspicious than the Earl of Morton's nor more likely to engender misunderstandings; indeed the first sentence which he uttered was calculated to mislead Rizzio.

"So!" said the Earl, with his usual jocular abruptness, as he entered, "The Signor's at his auld trade, plotting. I think the very blood o' you Italians has a venom in it, that makes conspiracies as natural to you as apples and pears to fruitful trees. What the deil, Dauvit, is this story about your being a conjoint Pandarus for the King against the Queen's bonny Mam'selle. I redde ye tak tent o' your head, or her father

will set it on your loof like a turnip on a trencher. But to speak solidly, and to the purpose, Dauvit, we Scotch folk are a moral people, and sic gallantings are no to be thole't; if ye will gallant, my man, ye'se no gallant here."

"My Lord," replied Rizzio, astonished at this address, and partly ascribing it to what had passed with the King, "I am myself unable to understand in what it is that I have offended; and it is not befitting that I should submit to be told that I am less honest in my trusts than other men."

"Hoity toity, hoity toity, here's pride! Dauvit, if ye're no pleased wi' us, we can spare you."

"I cannot," replied Rizzio, bridling his passion, "suppose that my Lord means to insult me. I complained not, nor have I cause. In this country I have been honoured with great trusts; I have in them been as faithful, and that's no brag, as my predecessors."

"Oh, we a' ken Dauvit, that ye're very clever; but it's no for the like o' you to speak wi' sic a controversial spirit to the lords and nobility of Scotland."

Rizzio, with his natural perspicacity and discernment, saw that they were somehow at cross purposes, and imposing a considerable restraint upon himself, he said,

"My Lord, I fear we are both under some mistake. May I ask the object of this visit? it seems necessary to bring us back to business."

"Weel," replied the Earl, "there's something like sense in that; and I'll no be wanting in plainness. Ken ye anything about this fasherie that the King has caused anent Southennan's bride?"

"I know not," said Rizzio, dryly, somewhat indeed proudly; "that I should undertake to answer the question farther than to say, I of my own knowledge know nothing; but as the matter touches His Majesty's honour and the Queen's happiness, I will deal frankly."

"I see," said Morton, affecting a familiar smile, "that thou'st no' without judgment; but thou'st o' a hasty temper, Dauvit."

Rizzio was obliged to smile; for this was certainly not his fault, but pretty much that of the Earl, and he replied,

"It is, I suspect, not without truth that the King's conduct towards the daughter of Knockwhinnie has not been governed by that respect which is due to the Queen; but it is a business in which I do not think my assistance would be asked;" and he added with a degree of firmness that was almost stern,

"Nor do I think there is one in all the Court who would venture seriously to impute to me such an oblivion of the favours I have received from her Majesty, as to say I would be assisting in such a work!"

The Earl felt the reproach, and changed colour; his eyes sparkled, and according to a habit which he had when angry, he set his teeth fiercely on edge, and spoke thickly through them.

"My lad,," said he, "tak tent. Be less upsetting, and think o' your ain station when ye're permitted to discourse wi' me."

"I shall always think of my duty; and not the least is to uphold myself against unmerited reproof."

"The fallow's gaun aff at the head," cried the Earl, "he's forgetting himself. But since ye say that ye hae nae hand in this concern o' Knockwhinnie's daughter, tho' I dinna believe you——"

"My Lord! if the Earl of Morton forgets his own dignity, he need be none surprised that I do so too, while I recollect my own. Has my Lord any farther business with me at this time?"

The astonishment of Morton at the bold equality assumed in these few words exceeded description. He absolutely glared on the Italian, half drew his sword, and after several attempts to give utterance to his rage, was at last able only to cry with a hideous hoarseness,

"Ye'll repent this."

Rizzio looked at him with cool contempt, and replied,

"I know it, my Lord."

The rage of Morton became ungovernable; he stamped with such vehemence that he made the house ring, and brought in the Lord Ruthven, who was standing in the anti-chamber, who had overheard the high tone in which the Earl expressed himself. He inquired what was the matter, and Morton exclaimed against the insolence of Rizzio, who listened to his rhapsody with a countenance expressive of the most unmitigated scorn. Ruthven also listened, and turning to Rizzio, who was with him no favourite, admonished him of the impropriety of his arrogance, not only to the Earl but towards many others of the nobility. The answer he received was brief.

"When others forget me, I remember myself."

Ruthven made no answer; but putting his arm into that of Morton, they left the apartment together. Ruthven, in looking back as he went out, seemed to Rizzio to have a wild and momentary resemblance to the appearance of Chatelard when he uttered his dismal prediction.

CHAPTER XXXII.

"Ye powers of aidance, show me such a way
As I am capable of going."

THE PICCOLOMINI.

WHEN perplexities overtake the fortunes of men, a corresponding confusion troubles their minds. It was the case with Southennan; for although he had with reluctance acknowledged that the most judicious measure he could adopt, to secure his own happiness and the honour of his bride, was to leave Scotland with her rather than to attempt to wage an unequal controversy with the King, yet the intention could not be carried into effect without more time and preparation than the exigency of the occasion admitted. In this crisis the impetuosity of Knockwhinnie was better than his prudence. He determined at once to remove Adelaide from Holyrood House, and to let the explanation of his conduct come after, as circumstances might suggest or point out. Thus it happened that, after some brief explanation with Adelaide of the necessity, he told her to be ready to go with him as soon as the King and Queen set out for Linlithgow in the morning; the state of the weather having, that afternoon, obliged them to postpone the excursion.

In the mean time Southennan, though much of the same mind, perceived that the removal of Adelaide would have a serious effect on the Queen's tranquillity, as it could not but apprise her that the profligacy of Darnley was considered truly dangerous. Under the influence of this delicate sentiment he became irresolute, and increased his embarrassments by his indecision. Perhaps he had but a choice of evils: at least, while he was balancing motives, his adversaries were acting from impulses. Altogether the situation of Southennan, while it required promptitude and determination, made it greatly difficult to determine what would be his proper course. But an incident occurred which soon disentangled him from his delicacy and embarrassment.

Disappointed of the enjoyment which the Queen had anticipated from the excursion, she had directed her customary do-

mestic circle to be assembled in the evening ; and not being aware that Southennan was forbid the Palace, she noticed his absence. It attracted, however, in no particular degree her observation, especially as an excuse was made for the absence of Adelaide also. She imagined the lovers were engaged in their own affairs, and she spoke playfully of them to Rizzio, who chanced to be standing near her, a freedom he often took, to the great displeasure of the nobility.

Whether any communication had been made to the King by the Earl of Morton, of the conversation which had passed between him and Rizzio, or whether Darnley, at that moment, was actuated by the impulse of his own spleen, may be disputed—but at the moment when Rizzio was replying to the gayety with which the Queen was remarking on the absence of Southennan and Adelaide, his Majesty, quitting the Earl, with whom he was engaged, came angrily up to Rizzio, and taking him hastily by the arm, drew him from the Queen's side with a degree of rudeness which excited universal attention. The Queen was exceedingly indignant ; but, without making any remark, she summoned Rizzio to come back. The effect of this little contrariety checked the wonted hilarity of the company ; and Mary herself, in evident chagrin, left her party earlier than usual. Darnley was sensible he had fallen into some indecorum ; and, as if the blemish on good manners could be lessened by perseverance in the same ill-humour, he appeared moody and sullen, and kept the guests, without entertainment, long after the Queen had retired ; for the etiquette of the Court did not permit them to withdraw while he remained.

In the mean while Auchenbrae had been renewing his arrangements with his worthy compeer, Rough Tam, to carry into effect their schemes, for conveying Adelaide away, the weather and the postponement of the visit of the Court to Linlithgow having marred their previous arrangements. Confident in the protection of the King, they were not very scrupulous as to the means of executing their design. They both thought the sooner they could carry it into effect, they would give his Majesty the greater satisfaction ; and having been apprized, after the Queen's party broke up, that Adelaide had not been there, they determined to try if they could not by some stratagem draw her from the Palace by the pretext of a message from her father. Auchenbrae could not himself be the bearer of the message, and he did not deem his colleague sufficiently smooth for the office. In consulting about finding

some fit person, Rough Tam recollected his new acquaintance Hughoc, and described him as qualified for the task, if he could be found and would undertake it.

Auchenbrae, not suspecting that he alluded to Southennan's man, readily adopted the suggestion, and Tam went straight to the Unicorn, where Hughoc nightly attended his master at supper, to engage him. The communication was soon made, and adroitly undertaken ; but Hughoc made an excuse that he must previously get leave from his master, before he could desert his attendance.

"Wha's he?" said Rough Tam.

"Oh! a very decent man," replied Hughoc; "Cornylees o' that ilk, there's no' a blither Laird in a' the West."

It was then arranged that Hughoc should proceed to the Palace, with a message to Adelaide, as from her father, requesting to see her, as he had been suddenly taken ill, and that Rough Tam should accompany him ; while Auchenbrae, with suitable men and horse, should be ready to meet them at the head of Leith Wynd, near the Netherbow.

Hughoc immediately sought his master, told him of this fortunate accident ; and, while he proceeded with his message to the Palace, Southennan went in quest of Knockwhinnie and assistance, to mar the stratagem.

On reaching Holyrood, Hughoc, leaving Rough Tam at the portal, went into the court ; and by the assistance of one of the Queen's servants, with whom he had scraped some acquaintance, was conducted to Adelaide's apartment, where he found her, busily engaged with her father in making preparations for removing her that night.

Hughoc, being known to them both, soon explained his errand, as well as the object it was intended to answer ; and with that address in which he was daily becoming more adroit, he suggested that the lady should come with him, and that her father should follow at a short distance, assuring them that they would be met by his master before reaching the place where Auchenbrae was to be in waiting. Adelaide hastily wrapped herself in her mantle ; and, under the protection of Rough Tam and Hughoc, her father following at a distance, hastened towards the city.

When they had reached about half way up the Canongate, Southennan suddenly appeared from the mouth of a wynd, and, without speaking, conveyed Adelaide into it, followed by Knockwhinnie and Hughoc, while the men he had with him prevented Rough Tam from entering.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

"A curse, a threefold curse upon this journey."

SCHILLER.

IN the morning, the weather being again fair, a numerous party of ladies and gentlemen on horseback assembled in front of the Palace, to ride with the court to Linlithgow. The Queen was already mounted, when Auchenbrae made his appearance; and the King, who had his foot in the stirrup, on seeing him coming, immediately gave the bridle to a groom, and moved several paces forwards to meet him.

The countenance of Auchenbrae was confused and clouded; instead of advancing straight towards his Majesty, he slunk aside, until he had passed behind a tower, which intercepted him from the view of the cavalcade. Darnley, with his constitutional impetuosity and disregard of decorum, called to him aloud, but Auchenbrae only halted, and waited his approach.

"Well," cried the King, "good news I hope?"

Auchenbrae shook his head: and then said,

"We have been disappointed this time. It will, however, be as well that your Majesty proceed on your journey, and take no notice of what has happened."

"Disappointed; how so?" exclaimed the King, chagrined and hastily.

Auchenbrae then briefly related what had taken place, as it had been reported by Rough Tam.

"How came he to trust so much to a stranger? know you aught of the knave?"

"I can but guess now."

"What is he?" cried Darnley, his choler rising.

"One of Southennan's servants."

"How! one of his!"

"Ill luck would even have it so," replied Auchenbrae, with unaffected humility; for he was fully sensible of the incautious manner in which Hughoc had been engaged in the business.

"And where is Adelaide?" cried Darnley, his anger mounting beyond control.

"With Southennan, as I fear, please your Majesty."

"Please! quotha! Is she in Edinburgh? Find out where she is—I will not ride till she is found."

"I beseech your Majesty to pass it by for the present; leave the business to me; all will yet go well: it should not be stirred in so publicly."

At this moment the Queen turned her palfrey, and coming forwards, gayly chided Darnley for his ungallant neglect; but he answered her so roughly, that she became pale, and rejoined the company in irrepressible emotion. He saw his error; and bidding Auchenbrae persevere, returned to his horse, but before mounting, after having taken the bridle, he went to the Queen, and in his best manner attempted to palliate his impropriety as an inadvertency. Mary smiled, and accepted the apology on behalf of the ladies; but it was observed that a melancholy shade, from that time, settled on her beauty, which never brightened to its original lustre again.

The cheerfulness, however, of the sunny morning air, and the sympathetic hilarity of so numerous a company, all determined to enjoy and contribute to pleasure, seemed to dissipate the cloud that had overcast her natural gayety; Darnley, too, forgot his guilty chagrin, and a holiday spirit, in its playfulness, came twinkling its wings and wantoning among them, as they spread and scattered themselves over the open fields, like knots and groups of flowers in a parterre. But the waywardness of the King's temper soon betrayed its inconsistency, and he began to complain in a querulous humour of the journey, wondering why he consented to it.

The inconstancy of our Scottish climate helped to increase his dissatisfaction. Before they had proceeded five miles to the westward, the wind began to rise, and here and there dark masses of vapour suddenly lowered in the sky. In them there was nothing to justify any apprehension of a storm, but they afforded a pretext to express discontent; and it so happened that once or twice, when the Queen expressed her confidence in the aspect of the weather, Darnley replied to her peevishly; sometimes testily; and on one occasion, with such petulance, that she looked at him with astonishment, and inquired what molested him. His answer was still ruder; she, however, made no reply, but rode slowly forwards with an aspect of thoughtful sadness, which touched with compassion those who observed it.

Upon Darnley, her visible distress had a different effect. Instead of mitigating his ill-humour, and inducing him to repress his discontent, it only irritated both. Mary herself,

though of a generous temperament, was also quick, and, when unjustly excited, wilful, somewhat capricious, and the deference to which she had, from infancy, been accustomed, made restraint upon her temper less easily endured than might, from her free good-nature, have been expected. But the patience with which she bore Darnley's querulousness, excited universal admiration, while it stung her to resentment. At last her spirit, being worn out with his fretfulness, she said, with that loftiness of mien which she could so well assume, that if he forgot himself and what was due to her, she would ride no farther.

As this was the first time she had ever evinced towards him anything like a determination to hold her mind independent, he was startled at the accent and at the manner of her address, but his surprise lasted only for an instant. His face flushed with anger, his eyes sparkled, and forgetful of all courtesy, he roughly demanded to know why she so spoke to him. To this rudeness she made no answer, but turned her horse's head, and rode, attended by the greater part of the company, to Dalmahoy, then inhabited by the mother of the Earl of Morton, an aged lady, distinguished for the strict propriety of her manners, and for uncommon fortitude and energy of character.

The appearance of the Queen, on reaching the gate, required no explanation to account for the suddenness of the visit. Every feature indicated a sense of suffering and affliction; so that when she alighted, and requested to be shown into a chamber, the venerable Dowager saw she was indeed in need of repose.

The amazement of Darnley, at her decision, was inconceivable, especially when he found himself deserted by several of the courtiers, whom he reckoned among his particular friends. He pulled up his bridle, and without turning his horse's head, looked round, leaning on the back of the saddle, as if he expected, that by not following, the Queen would return; and his humiliation was extreme, when he saw her, with all her ladies, disappear behind a rising ground.

His first feeling was anger, and by his gestures, he seemed inclined to gallop after her; in a moment, however, observing one of the young lords who was of the party smiling, he briskly checked himself, and affected to make light of the matter. It was only for a moment: his passion rallied; he expressed himself with vehemence, and finally clapping spurs to his horse, never drew bridle until he reached the portal of Holyrood House.

His return, and the sudden report of the Queen's indisposition excited a great sensation in Edinburgh. A crowd assembled round the Palace, through the midst of which one of the Queen's servants came riding in haste ; it was understood to command Rizzio and some of the Lords of the Council to attend her Majesty.

This incident, together with a rumour that began to spread from the servants of those who had returned with the King, as to the true nature of the Queen's illness, tended to excite the popular feeling against Rizzio ; for, like all such tales, the occurrence was soon exaggerated into a plausible and very matter-of-fact-like story, especially when repeated in connexion with the manner in which the King had snatched Rizzio from the Queen's side the preceding evening ; and, in consequence, without tumult, a considerable commotion arose among the populace, who vented their displeasure in terms equally discreditable to both their Majesties.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

"Thou basest thing, avoid, hence from my sight." }

SHAKESPEARE.

SOUTHENNAN and Knockwhinnie conveyed Adelaide, early in the morning after her rescue from the machination of Auchenbrae, to the residence of the Lady Kilburnie, in Linlithgow, with the intention of celebrating the marriage there, as soon as the mother of Southennan could be present at the ceremony. In the mean time, Auchenbrae and his rough compeer had discovered the rout they had taken ; and the former, on hearing of the King's return to Holyrood House, went to inform him, and to receive his farther instructions.

He found his Majesty sitting sullenly alone in his closet, ruminating on the occurrence of the morning. It had taught him a lesson which even his folly could not prevent him from feeling. Often as he had before repined at the superior deference which the nobility and members of the Court paid to the Queen, the singular manner in which they had deserted him on the first frown of her displeasure, convinced him that all their professions of reverence and attachment really were

but as ornaments covering a very slender tie. He palliated his own behaviour in such a manner to himself, that while he could not but acknowledge he was in some degree to blame, he thought the manner in which the Queen had acted was unnecessarily calculated to injure him with the country, and in consequence he nourished resentment against her, far beyond the equity of the occasion. He could not, however, disguise that he had brought himself into this dilemma by the indiscretion with which he had so rashly declared his criminal affection for Adelaide; and this reflection made the appearance of Auchenbrae at that particular time disagreeable, almost obnoxious.

"What want you?" he exclaimed, as Auchenbrae was ushered in; looking at him from beneath his brows, and askance over his shoulder. A reception so unexpected and so different from the familiarity to which he had been accustomed, transfixed Auchenbrae to the spot for the space of a minute, and until the King again looking up, demanded, in a still more emphatic tone,

"What want you, I say?"

The answer was hesitatingly delivered: such unwonted severity being altogether strange, and, as Auchenbrae thought, without cause.

"I have come to inform your Majesty that Knockwhinnie and his daughter, with Southennan, have this morning at daylight fled to Linlithgow."

"What have I to do with that? Come when I am in another humour. I hate their very names! Would they were all sunk in the sea!"

"Is it not then your Majesty's pleasure that they should be pursued? It is supposed their intention is to make for England."

"What then?" exclaimed Darnley.

"Your Majesty might direct their detention before they can cross the borders."

"How! mean you in the Queen's name? for I have neither power nor dominion in Scotland. But I will have nothing farther to do with it; let them go!"

Auchenbrae was too well acquainted with the vacillations of Darnley to act on such a hasty bidding. He knew when the spleen of the moment, from whatever cause arising, was over, that he would be blamed if he obeyed orders dictated in the precipitancy of passion; so that while moving to retire, he inquired with more than his usual pliancy,

"When will your Majesty be pleased that I should come again?"

"Never!"

"I hope it is not to be so," said Auchenbrae, with a more familiar accent. But the King at once put an end to the interview, by saying, angrily,

"Begone! I will send when you are wanted!"

As Auchenbrae retired, the page in attendance informed the King of the messenger who had come for Rizzio and the Lords of the Council, whom the Queen had summoned. The intelligence struck him as something extraordinary and formidable; his complexion faded, and with a tremulous voice and averted eye he desired the page to bid Rizzio come to him; and he rose from his seat, and walked several times with a disturbed air across the room. In this state the Italian found him, and, on entering, paused, expecting some violent burst of passion; but the reverse was the case. Darnley regarded him for a moment in silence, and, with something of diffidence and doubt in his appearance, said,

"So, her Majesty requires you and the Council to attend her at Dalmahoy; know you the purpose?"

Rizzio, who was in full-possession, replied with the respectfulness with which he always addressed the King,

"I am ignorant of any special business that can require such solemn consideration, unless"—and he looked gravely—"unless it be some matter touching her own comfort."

This was said in total ignorance of the disagreement which had taken place, and under an impression that her Majesty felt herself seriously unwell. But it had the effect of alarming Darnley, who, supposing the Italian acquainted with their quarrel, rejoined,

"If that be all, I think the journey might be postponed; for she is not obdurate in her anger."

The Italian started, perceiving that something had occurred between their Majesties; and, although in his heart not dissatisfied, he affected much concern, and with an eager timidity expressed his sorrow that any accident had occurred to discompose the Queen.

"She is self-willed, and can abide no control," said Darnley; "and when she has once given an opinion, all the saints and apostles will not turn her. But go; and by your judicious management I doubt not she will see her error."

"Then," replied Rizzio, "it has been a matter of no moment."

"Oh!" replied Darnley, affecting to laugh, "a thing of mere household thrift, a ravelling of yarn, vexatious, but not ruinous."

Rizzio reflected before he made any reply, and then said, with his characteristic plausibility,

"In that case, the remedy will come better from your Majesty. I dare not presume to offer any opinion on a matter so delicate."

"Don't say so. Perhaps, had you interposed less, there would have been no occasion."

There was verbal injustice in this charge. Rizzio had foreseen that Darnley himself would soon exhaust the Queen's affection, and abstained with equal solicitude and skill from doing any thing to promote a difference which was so inevitable. There was thus no affectation when he replied,

"I am traduced by those who venture to say so; for in all things I have been a true and faithful servant, who better knew his duty than to make an ungrateful return for the patronage he has enjoyed."

"I do not question, Rizzio, that you have been faithful to the Queen."

"Nor have I, Sire, been lacking in aught of my duty to your Majesty."

"You grow bold," said Darnley, scarcely aware of his words; "but presume not on the mischance of this day."

"With permission," replied the Italian, "I will retire, for I cannot vindicate myself against factless imaginations. I am innocent; but how may that be proved against suspicion which condescends on no circumstance? Nor may I unblamed hold controversy with your Majesty."

CHAPTER XXXV.

"As the sun
Ere it is risen, sometimes paints its image
In the atmosphere, so often do the spirits
Of great events stride on before the events
And in to-day already walks to-morrow."

THE DEATH OF WALLENSTEIN.

Among others summoned, as a matter of course, to attend the Council, were the Earl of Morton and the Lord Ruthven, neither of whom were acquainted with the King's return to

Holyrood, until the order to attend her Majesty was delivered to them. Thus it happened that instead of proceeding direct to Dalmahoy, they severally went to the Palace, to ascertain from the King himself what had taken place, and they both met at the door of his closet just as Rizzio was coming out.

A breach between the Italian and them had for some time been widening. They lost no opportunity of convincing him how small a space he occupied in their esteem, nor was he shy of retaliating their contumely with scorn. At that moment he was in no humour to repress his feelings towards them, for he was chafed more by the manner of Darnley than by any thing he had said to him; and he foresaw that some decided result, which would have an immediate and material effect on the King's condition, and on his own, would probably result from the deliberations of the Council.

As a matter of ordinary etiquette and courtesy, he stood back to allow them to pass, and bowed with unusual formality as they proceeded forwards, evidently not intending to speak to him. Morton, however, changed his mind as he was about to enter the closet, and turning round said, with his customary freedom.

"Dauvit, what's the straemash between their Majesties? Has the Queen been warming his lugs? For if a' tales be true, she had some reason."

Rizzio replied, dryly, that he had no information on the subject.

"Hech, man," said the Earl, sarcastically; "ye needna be sae costive in your speech, Dauvit; but I can see that ye're counting on making profit to yoursel o' it."

"I am much indebted to my Lord for the good opinion he entertains of me."

"Thou's no blate," replied Morton; "and nae doubt, in season, thou'll get thy reward for being aye sae ready to fish in troubled water."

The Lord Ruthven, a tall, gaunt, cadaverous figure, took no part in the dialogue, but stood scowling upon Rizzio, waiting until Morton had finished, when he reminded him that their time was running out.

"That's true; I was forgetting mysel' wi' this fallow. Dauvit——"

"What is my Lord's pleasure?"

"Thou may gang about thy business till a mair convenient season." And, laughing at his self-imagined joke, walked into the closet, leaving Rizzio burning with wrath at the man's derision with which he was so wantonly treated.

"This," said he to himself, "cannot be much longer endured : it must come or be brought to some issue soon—a bloody issue. They see the King's weakness, and they perceive the confidence her Majesty has in me. What can be their present drift ? Can they wish to have the management of the state, by making the weak Prince their instrument ? But, whatever their designs and intents may be, I stand in the way. Yes, Chatelard, the time is coming ; and let it. I shall not change a jot, for no worse can come than thy prediction."

His suspicions of the intention of Morton were not altogether groundless. Ruthven was of a different description : he was a plain straight-forward character, little likely to be deterred from the execution of any purpose by moral considerations. On the contrary, he had a sort of constitutional enjoyment in undertakings of difficulty and danger, especially if mixed up with mystery. He was indeed a character peculiar almost to that age ; not that such characters are ever extinct, though the influence of more temperate times places them, as it were, in abeyance. Ruthven was naturally cruel, and had a grim gratification in the act of guilt ; but he had also a wild principle, which he himself mistook for justice. He would embark in no enterprize which, according to this principle, was not necessary or equitable. He did not do evil from any gratuitous delight in it as evil, but he scrupled not to take a part in transactions which law could not sanction, and religion condemned. He was, therefore, a ready weapon to those who could convince his shallow understanding of the expediency of any undertaking, whether for public good, or private revenge.

On entering the closet, they found Darnley in the state we have already described, discontented with himself and with every other thing. He laid the blame of discomfort on Rizzio, by observing to Morton that the Italian's insolence was becoming so intolerable that it ought to be abated.

"Your Majesty," replied the Earl, "has made a very judicious observe ; but wha will bell the cat, unless ye take the business in hand your royal self."

"That would be to no purpose," replied Darnley ; "for were I to speak of it to the Queen, she would immediately suspect that I was interfering with her government."

"I hope and trust," said Morton, "she's no sae witless ; for we must get rid o' him, and better by fair than foul means. If her Majesty winna put her shoulder to the wheel, she may

just stand on the road-side, a looker-on, till the wark's done. I will this very day, at the Council-board, bring the matter up; for really the fallow dishes at us a', high and low, wise and wanton, wi' the horns o' the bull o' Bashan. He's no to be suffered. Didna ye see, my Lord Ruthven, in what an unreverent manner he held up his snout to me?"

"Fortunately," said Lord Ruthven, "I have never had much to do with him: but it's a new thing in the kingdom of Scotland, to see a foreigner ruling and reigning so contumaciously; and snubbing the oldest and boldest Barons of the realm, as if they were no better than his own vassals."

"Na, for that," replied Morton, "he would be ceevil to them, if they were sae. But I'm glad, my Lord Ruthven, ye hae been a witness to what I hae borne at his hands; and had I run him through the body, I'm sure ye never could hae said, wi' a clear conscience, that it was ill did ye. But we'll hae some discourse to that purpose, in our way to Dalmahoy; and when we come back, we'll see what his Majesty may then in his wisdom advise us to do. In the mean time, what would your Majesty be pleased that we should say to the Queen anent this rugging and riving that has happened between your Majesty and her? I hope it's no true that she met an accident from your niece that has done great damage to her sight; for I see nae signs o' her ten commandments being inflicted on your cheeks?"

Darnley laughed at the Earl's jocularly, well knowing that the story of a fight was his own invention at the moment.

"Weel," continued Morton, "if things did no' come to sic an extremity, it's a' the decenter; but what would ye advise us to tell her Majesty to do, as nae doubt we are sent for on that purpose?"

"Perhaps," said Darnley, from his knowledge of her fluctuating temper, with more sagacity than was expected from him, "before ye reach Dalmahoy, the wind may have shifted: but blow how it may, my wish is for quietness and peace; and I know nothing which should prevent all the breach that has yet taken place from being made up."

"That's very sensible," said Morton.

"Very much so, indeed," said Ruthven.

"And," added Morton, "our endeavour shall neither be wanting nor slack. But hae ye nae gew-gaw or bonnie-wee naething wi' a whistle in the tail o't, that ye could send to her as a love-token and peace-offering?"

The King declared that he had nothing.

"Weel then," replied the Earl, "ye had better come wi' us yoursel', for delays are dangerous, and naebody can tell what hemp-seed may be sown between you and your Sovereign Leddy, if ye bide o'er lang apart."

Ruthven seconded the proposition, observing, that if the Italian was in any way to blame for the misunderstanding that had taken place, it would be as well to have the countenance of the King at the Council-board, especially as something must be done to cleanse the Council of Rizzio's presence.

"It is a strange thing," continued he, "that an adventurer of his degree should have the upper-hand in the government of an ancient State, ruling the Sovereign, and heeding neither the wise nor the great of the land. It betrays a sad decay of our old Scottish independence to let such things be. For my part, if three honest men can be found to back me, I'll not be the last to allow the grievance to remain without making some attempt for a riddance."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

"No honours were omitted,
No outward courtesy."—

SCHILLER.

THE lady of Dalmahoy soon perceived that the Queen was more agitated than indisposed; and she learned with sorrow from the ladies of her suite something of the querulousness she had endured from the King. The character of Darnley was indeed by this time correctly estimated, not only by those within his own immediate sphere and circle, but by the public in general, and an anxious sympathy for the Queen's infelicitous marriage was beginning to spread throughout the country.

When her Majesty had some time indulged her vexation at having been made such an object of public remark, she desired to see her venerable hostess, for she had heard of her great prudence and domestic virtues.

The Dowager Countess of Morton was far advanced in life, precise and formal. She belonged to times and fashions which had passed away, and regarded as a deplorable lapse from courtly manners, the easy elegance which had been first intro-

duced into Scotland by the mother of Mary, and the cultivation of which Mary herself, both by example and precept, studiously encouraged. But beneath these light prejudices she possessed a lofty and masculine mind. To great discernment of character she united decision, and a wisdom adequate for the dominion of a kingdom. In her appearance she was stately and ceremonious, affecting unusual pomp in her apparel, and on all occasions requiring a strict observance of those rules which had in the past age been deemed essential to high breeding.

After having received the Queen into her castle, she considered herself as the servant of her Majesty, and did not obtrude into her presence until her attendance was required; but foreseeing that she might soon be summoned, she dressed herself in her richest paraphernalia, to be in readiness to obey.— Her head, according to the fashion of Queen Margaret's age, was built up to a towering altitude, and studded in the midst of laces and bows of curiously wrought cambric, with knobs and carbuncles of jewelry. She wore enormous earrings of emerald or green glass, wrought into imitations of clusters of grapes; and her tall and aged neck was hooped with golden bands and amber beads and Italian pearls of great magnitude. Her robe was of the richest purple velvet, speckled with gold, and adorned with curiously flowing trimmings of lace, which were also spangled. Her petticoat, without folds or drapery, was a creaseless cone of crimson satin, richly embroidered with peonies, tulips, and roses, and other splendid flowers of equal brilliancy, magnitude, and delicacy, and the bottom was adorned with an affluent flounce of rich needle-work, representing birds, butterflies, and other gaudy insects. Her fingers were encrusted with rings of precious stones, more eminent for their variety than their value; and she led by a riband an Italian greyhound, the admiration of all the country side. Her train was supported by a little old decrepid woman, fantastically dressed, leaning on a staff, crowned with an ivory ball, on the top of which stood a dove with expanded wings, bearing an olive-branch in its bill.

When the old lady, preceded by two officers of her household, the seneschal and the warder of the castle, entered the apartment where the Queen was seated, such unexpected magnificence so surprised her Majesty that she involuntarily rose to receive her, and with unaffected sentiment did homage to the imbodied genius of the olden time. It was, however, but for a moment, and Mary would have soon yielded to the effect of the second survey, had she not perceived how much the deco-

rum of form and solemnity entered into the Dowager's conceptions of the proprieties of rank and dignity.

Assuming as much ceremony as the wonted gayety of her nature would permit, Mary requested the Countess to be seated, and that she would desire her attendants to withdraw, as she wished for the benefit of her advice in private. The old lady gently waved her hand, and the seneschal and warder retired backward with lowly reverences. The aged Elspeth, her train-bearer, followed; but finding the attempt to leave the room backwards inconvenient, she turned round, and was moving off; her stately mistress, however, reminded her that the Queen's Majesty was present, and she then sidled to the door.

The Queen and the Countess were thus left alone. The spirits of Mary again sank, till the presence of the Countess reminded her of the purpose for which she had requested her company. She then related what had happened between her and the King, and also his indiscretion with Adelaide.

During her narrative, the Dowager sat perfectly still; she listened with the gravest attention, and only now and then, by a slight inclination of her head, indicated that she was interested in the relation; and when the Queen concluded by asking her advice, she did not immediately reply, but paused for the space of a minute or so, and appeared in profound cogitation; she then said,

"I regret that your Highness has summoned the Council on this domestic affair; for it is but an occurrence, such as falls out sometimes between the most loving man and wife. It is not mighty enough to claim the consideration of great men, and to draw the attention of the kingdom."

"And am I then to submit," said the Queen, eagerly, "to be thus exposed to such bickering in public, and such wrong in private?"

"Alas!" replied the old Lady, with a sigh, "I fear it must be so. Sure are the evil consequences that have arisen from that ungracious familiarity which has broken down all the ancient fences of propriety. It would have made the hair lift the helmets from the heads of our ancestors, had they but thought it possible that the King and Queen would break into anger in public."

Notwithstanding the personal feeling which Mary had in this subject, she could scarcely refrain from smiling at the awfulness with which the venerable Countess seemed to regard the decay of manners. She, however, replied with becoming seriousness,

"What has happened cannot be helped. It is to provide for the future that I entreat the advice of your wisdom and experience."

"Your Highness, in applying to me, consults, I fear, a shallow oracle: all I can say is that the matter of happiness between kings and queens is of the same substance as between the clown and his dame. A decent ceremony is necessary to both, though light thinkers may not discern its uses at the scanty hearth of the cotter."

The Queen perceived that the prejudices of the Dowager, ascribed a greater degree of familiarity to the customs of her Court than was really the case; and in consequence entered more minutely into her domestic circumstances than would otherwise have been necessary. To the recital the same grave and motionless attention was paid as when she described the unhappy jar that had obliged her to forego the excursion to Linlithgow.

"Please your Highness," said the Dowager, "by what you have been telling me, I hope there will be no offence in saying, that your Court needs the presence of elderly and discreet ladies. It is natural to your Highness's time of life, that you should take to young attendants and gay dispositions, but there should be a compensating solidity of character to keep down the natural buoyancy of such companionship."

Mary hastily interrupted her, and inquired if she would reside with her.

"Your wish," replied the Dowager, "would be a command, but old age is stronger than the power of potentates; and I am lame and infirm." She then resumed the thread of her remarks, and said, "Moreover, though there are many wise and grave men among the ministers of your Highness, pillars of the realm, and worthy of trust and worship, yet none of them are without fault. My son, and I am not without the partiality of a mother, needs to be watched. He means well, and is ambitious of renown among great names, he is, however, not only emulous of high deeds, but too fond of having his own way of doing them, and by this a second growth of craftiness has overspread his natural character. He was a tree of true oak, but an ivy has spread upon him, and I fear, caused detriment and damage to his nature and character. However, your Highness, I can but counsel you not to place all your business in the hands of men; the wisest of them have but coarse thoughts of feminine dependency, and a Queen has as much need of counsellors of her own sex, as the warrior in

the field of soldierly companions. There is the Lady of Argyll, a pattern to all, and of a sufficient juvenility to be a social companion. I would counsel your Majesty to take her into your household, and have less to do with male wisdom than with female prudence, when any difference may, by ill chance, happen between you and the King again."

While they were thus discoursing, notice was brought in that Rizzio and some two or three of the council had arrived.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

"My son! of those old narrow ordinances,
Let us not hold too lightly."

SCHILLER.

By this time the Queen regretted that she had been so hasty in calling her Counsellors to Dalmahoy. She had been prompted to this step by the resentment of the moment, being resolved, under its influence, to separate herself from Darnley.

The illusions of passion, under which she had made him her consort, were dissipated. Whatever had been her regard for him, she was awakened to the truth, that his for her was but of a slender kind. His vanity had been pleased with her early open preference; the perseverance with which she cherished her attachment, against the remonstrances of her friends, was also calculated to seduce him into a belief, that his power over her was not to be easily shaken; and under this impression he came to Dalmahoy with Morton and Ruthven, persuaded that a reconciliation would soon be established.

In the course, however, of the ride from Edinburgh, although the distance was but a few miles, he was so wrought upon by their representations, that instead of being disposed, on his arrival, to meet her Majesty in a conciliatory spirit, as he was at their outset inclined, he felt as if concession were due to himself.

They had convinced him, in the pursuit of their own ambitious designs, that he could never be more than a cipher in the Government, unless he received the crown matrimonial; that is, such an acknowledgment of his royalty as would give him full marital right to exercise all the powers and prerogatives

with which the Queen herself was invested. Accordingly, it came to pass, as soon as the Council formally assembled, that, instead of waiting to know for what business the Queen desired their advice, the Lord Ruthven proposed, as the subject of their deliberation, that the King, in addition to his nominal royalty, should be recommended to the Queen for the matrimonial-crown. Rizzio, who was officially present, perceived from the manner in which the business was brought forwards, that it was the result of a predetermined plan, and well aware that the Queen was neither prepared for such a proposition, nor disposed to surrender so much of her power, set himself against the suggestion.

"The Council," said he, "has been summoned in haste by her Majesty, doubtless for some special purpose, and no business can be originated until she has been pleased to declare the matter in which she requires advice."

This check enraged Ruthven, notwithstanding its reasonableness; and in consequence he remarked, with a degree of heat which the occasion ought not to have inspired, that the Privy Council of Scotland were not to be taught their duty by a foreign upstart.

The Earl of Morton, as well as others, saw the unprovoked rudeness of this speech, and desirous that no more at that time should go forth to the world than what was already inevitable, observed,

"It's a' right what he says, we should receive her Majesty's command before we proceed to other business. So first and foremost, Dauvit, gang ye ben to her Majesty, and beg her orders anent the matter we are to determine."

Rizzio obeyed the directions with reluctance, and communicated what had taken place, and requested to be honoured with her Majesty's commands to the Council.

Mary was never at a loss when any question arose which touched herself, her honour, or her dignity, and, to the astonishment of Rizzio, she said,

"Go and say that I would know from them in what manner the regal dignity can be maintained! and you will relate the particulars of what has taken place this morning."

Rizzio, who was really uninformed on the subject, reminded her Majesty of that fact, and then mentioned the suggestion for giving the King the Crown-matrimonial which Ruthven had intimated his intention to propose.

At any other crisis the Queen would have heard this without emotion, for Darnley himself had often in private urged

her to confer that dignity ; but having discerned his weakness, and being afraid of his violence, she had always evaded the request : her reply was emphatic.

"Hitherto," said she in a resolute tone, "I have refused it out of motives of public polity ; truly he has earned the honour, by his conduct to me this morning ! No, he shall never have the matrimonial-crown of Scotland. It can only be conferred with the consent of the states of the realm, and he knows how well he has earned their approbation. I say no more, you will break up the Council on the best pretext you may, for I have been somewhat rash and heady, and it is time to arrest the hazard of farther disorder."

Rizzio returned to the Council, and informed them, that it would be expedient to postpone the consideration of the business on which the Queen desired their advice until after her return to Edinburgh, especially as some of them were disposed to press upon her the propriety of granting the matrimonial-crown to her consort.

Both Ruthven and Darnley started from their seats, and demanded to know by whom she had been informed of any such intention.

"By me," replied Rizzio proudly, and with stern resolution. "I have been sworn to serve her faithfully, and could I do so, and withhold from her knowledge what has been so openly proposed here."

Some of the Counsellors thought that in this proceeding Rizzio acted bravely, and applauded him accordingly ; but Ruthven and Morton's party were disconcerted. They saw in it but a new instance of what they deemed his audacious presumption, and unbounded power, and an altercation arose among them, which was only ended by Maitland of Lethington, the Chancellor, dissolving the meeting.

As far as related to the Council itself the resolution was judicious, but the whole proceeding could produce no other effect than dissonance and discord among the members. The immediate result was a division of them into two parties, the King's and the Queen's. The earl of Morton was the most intractable of the King's friends, indeed, of the whole party ; and his voice was heard the loudest in the deliberation, in so much that it was supposed among the household that an actual quarrel had taken place. His mother the Countess, who well knew his impassioned obstinacy, on being informed of their violence, placed herself in the way to intercept him before he could present himself to the Queen ; and it thus happened,

when he came out from the chamber, in which the Council was held, that she met him as he descended to the hall, and taking him aside, said,

“Consider what you are about. We are in the midst of embers and combustibles; neither can be stirred without danger; look you to the risk of angry deliberations; I fear the guilt that may come of rash counsels, and think none of the advantage which troubles in the kingdom may bring to yourself. My son, I fear your honour is in danger, and that a fire may be kindled from this morning’s collision that will not be soon quenched.”

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

“There is a busy motion in the heaven;
The wind doth chase the flag upon the tower;
Fast sweep the clouds, the sickle of the moon,
Struggling, darts snatches of uncertain light.”

THE DEATH OF WALLENSTEIN.

THE anger of the Queen having subsided, and the judicious advice of the Countess of Morton taking effect before the Council broke up, she requested the King to remain with her at Dalmahoy, and suggested, that in the morning, notwithstanding the dispersion of the party, they should resume their journey to Linlithgow.

Soothed by this proposal, coming immediately from herself, Darnley had been too much disturbed by what had taken place, and the consequences which threatened to arise from it, not to accede. His mind being thus relieved of anxiety, and somewhat gladdened by the reconciliation, he appeared that evening to greater advantage than usual. He even treated Rizzio with affability, and every thing wore an auspicious aspect, and was consolatory to Mary.

Of all the party no one was more content than the venerable Dowager; for the Queen was so delighted with the beauty of method, and the calm of regularity, which so eminently predominated in her household, that she was eloquent in her commendation of the usages of the better times, while she encouraged the old lady to expatiate on the virtue of decorum,

and the efficacy to domestic happiness of a well-regulated formality.

The Earl, her son, who at all points might justly be said to have been the reverse of his mother, assumed, during supper, a degree of restraint at variance with his habits, in deference to her peculiar veneration for etiquettes ; and thus, though his broad and free humour was in some degree wanting, a more temperate cheerfulness adequately supplied the deficiency. The Lord Ruthven, who also remained, did likewise some violence to his austere nature ; he abstained from controversy, to which he was constitutionally inclined, and seemed to differ less in opinion from those around him than on ordinary occasions. Moreover, he spoke seldomer than common, and thus his harsh, hollow, and creaking voice interfered but little with the general harmony which pervaded the company. Rizzio alone, of all who had the honour of sitting at the royal table, appeared thoughtful, he was observed to watch with a lurking eye the countenances of his adversaries ; for as such, notwithstanding the plausibility of appearances, he could not but regard Darnley, Morton, and Ruthven. Once or twice he thought that he could perceive signs of a secret understanding exchanged among them, and, according to the maxim of his country, he suspected that the sudden civility with which he was then treated was the result of some injury intended, or already a-foot against him. Nor were they less vigilant in observing his altered demeanour ; his thoughtfulness was regarded as morose ; and recollecting in what manner they had treated him in the morning, they were conscious he could entertain for them no very conciliatory disposition. However, the evening passed with that moderate mirth which is the happy result of voluntary restraint, and the desire to conceal it.

The Queen remained at the table longer than her accustomed hour, amused and pleased with the extreme debonair attentions of her erect and punctilious hostess. Immediately on her retiring she was followed by Darnley ; but Ruthven and Morton, with several of the other guests remained behind, and from the immediate change that took place in their behaviour towards Rizzio, he could no longer question the correctness of his suspicions. They did not, it is true, actually attempt to vex and mortify him by their taunts, as was too often the case, but they acted as if they shunned communion with him. This treatment, obvious to all present, Rizzio, with more than his usual self command, appeared as if he neither heeded nor felt, a species of retaliation which his enemies were sufficiently ex-

cited to resent, and Morton would have done so on the spot in sarcasm. The motive of Ruthven was deeper, and, as if suffering from a sense of injury, he became gloomy, and scowled from under the caverns of his brows with the tiger eyes of couchant revenge.

When a decent interval had elapsed after the King and Queen had withdrawn, Rizzio also left the room, and being troubled in thought, and discomfited by the incidents of the evening, he went down into the court-yard of the castle.

The night was cold and wintry, and a thickness in the air hung round the lamps at the portal of the hall, as if there had been something furry in the darkness; yet it was not a dark night, for the moon was high, and though not generally visible, her disk was at times seen wading through the misty air, with scarcely power enough to throw shadows. The shaded side of the court, however, was sufficiently marked, and at times the pinnacles on the turrets, when the light brightened, assumed a mystical configuration, suggesting dim reminiscences of ghastly visitants from crypts and cloisters.

To Rizzio, who felt a weight upon his spirits, the scene was dreamy and apparitional. Beneath the battlements grotesque runes and water-spouts, sculptured into fantastical figures and chimeras, stretched themselves forwards like imps and incubi, such as are supposed to hover in the air around the spell-fenced circles of sorcery, when futurity is invoked and constrained to withdraw her curtain. He felt as if he were in the presence of some unknown danger; and yet there was no visible omen. Once or twice he thought some one called him by name, and a dread fell upon him, and a sound was in his ears such as fated men are sometimes said to hear when dangers are contriving against them.

After taking several turns in the court, giving way to these gloomy cogitations, he returned into the hall, where many of the servants were standing round the hearth, and requested one of them to conduct him to a bed-chamber. His request was immediately obeyed; one of the domestics lighted a taper, and walked before him from the hall along a narrow passage leading to the foot of a turret-staircase, near to which a low door opened into a small apartment, where the decrepit Elspeth was sitting. The crone was asleep, her head leaning on her bosom; but on being roused she started awake, and began to chide for being disturbed; suddenly observing the Italian, she checked herself, and lighting a candle at the taper in the hand of the servant, she assumed almost the suavity of her mistress, and solicited Rizzio to come with her.

Notwithstanding her apparent great age and general deformity, she ascended the turret-stair with remarkable agility ; for in truth she was much younger than she appeared, being one of those distorted and premature creatures whom the Scottish peasantry fearfully suspect of being substitutes for unchristened children, whom it is alleged the fairies steal from their mothers' bosoms. Her natural temper was cross and querulous ; but she had been so long under the discipline of her stately and ceremonious lady, that she affected to be gentle and obliging, and even in some degree did possess a smoothness of manner that was interesting and agreeable.

On reaching the landing-place, which opened into a long, spacious, dark gallery, she moved on before Rizzio, holding her light aloft, bowling in her gait like something mis-shapen and unblest, until she conducted him into a gaunt and dismal chamber, and on seeing that the fire lighted in the grate had fallen low, she stirred it, and stooping down, still holding the light in her hand, began to blow the faded embers with her mouth.

Rizzio, who had, on entering the room, seated himself, looked at her in this occupation as a phenomenon that belonged not to the beings and business of the world : she seemed so strange, so hideous, dwarfish, and supernatural, especially when once or twice, while she was endeavouring to revive the fire, she happened to cast her eyes grimly and gathered upwards, and peered at him with a keen and witch-like inquisition. At last, she set down the light on the hearth, and raising herself upright, if it could be so called, which was only unclosing the hoop of her decrepitude, by lifting her head from her breast, she chattered her long yellow disranked teeth.

Rizzio, disturbed by her scrutiny, inquired what she saw about him to make her gaze so strangely.

"The when and the where are not yet named. It may be soon, or it may be syne. But I see at thy back a demon thing, holding outspread a winding-sheet, spotted with many a blob of blood. No living eye may that demon see ; but its fingers, that hold the sheet of fate, are fleshless and mouldy. Dost fear to die ?"

Before Rizzio could inquire what her vision or her rhapsody portended, she snatched up her light, and rolled, as it were, out of the room, like an uneven and many-cornered mass, instinct with purpose and motion. He called on her to stop, and she glared back on him, and replied, "When all is quiet ;" leaving him in some degree doubtful if she intended to return.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

“The King
Felt in his heart the phantom of the knife,
Long ere Ravallac armed himself therewith.”

SCHILLER.

WHEN Elspeth had retired, Rizzio for some time sat reflecting upon her singular, repulsive, and unearthly appearance, and above all on the wild manner in which she chattered her teeth, and uttered her bodement. The fire again fell low; but as there was peat on the hearth, he rebuilt it, and soon blew it again into flame.

The wisest men have sometimes a hankering to know their predestined fortunes; and a crisis at this epoch in the life and feelings of the Italian, made him anxious to unclasp the volume of destiny; and thus, although incredulous to the pretensions of Scottish seers and spaewives, his spirit took a superstitious infection from the circumstances in which he was placed. Conscious that he was surrounded by perils, dread and apprehension became mingled with the curiosity which the prognostication of the crone awakened.

He sat by the fire, ruminating on the incidents of the day and the adventures of his life. He recalled to mind, that all the turns of his fortune had been ever heralded to him by the introduction of some new character; and he wrought himself, in the eeriness of the time, into a persuasion that something in the appearance of these harbingers was always in unison with the event that succeeded. When the omen, the augury, or by what other name the precursor might be designated, was fair, beautiful, and cheering, the event which followed was always benign and encouraging, leading on to prosperity. But when the demons of fate kythed in forbidding forms, he was assured that the next turn in his destiny would be disastrous.

These reflections made him feel as if something dismal and dreadful would arise from his rencounter with Elspeth; not that he regarded her either as the cause or the agent of the coming calamity, but only as a sign, an eclipse, which perhaps

itself produced nothing, though it was an index of fearful things working out their dire effects. As he sat contemplating the embers and the consuming fuel in the grate, he fancied that the changes in their form were also tokens and forerunners of destiny, each bearing the legend of some occult intelligence, and all fraught with warning and admonition.

While he was sitting in this joyless mood, hearing the noises within the castle gradually ebbing into silence, he heard the drawbridge pulled up for the night, and the portcullis lowered with a rough rude sound, resembling in volume, but harsher in discord, abrupt thunder. He listened; and this dismal noise was followed by the resounding clang of the hall-doors, the driven bolts of which echoed through the interior of the castle with a sound not so loud, indeed, but more solemn than ordnance. A profound stillness succeeded; no earthly sound was heard; the very watch-dog, which howled loud and long when the portcullis was let down, was still; and yet sounds both of power and of terror, were heard murmuring in every direction. The rising blasts at intervals shook the casements; the vanes and weathercocks on the pinnacles creaked in the wind, like the swinging of gibbeted bones; and a rattling was heard of chains—it might be from those of the drawbridge; while ever and anon a heavy low foot-fall was heard in the neighbouring gallery. Still all noise within the castle seemed departing; and for some time a dead silence, as if it possessed palpable power, curdled his blood, with an influence colder, and as unseen and irresistible, as freezing. The flesh crawled on his bones, and he sat immovable in his faculties, irresolute in his will, and with a horror upon him more unutterable than that with which Herod felt the worms writhing from his universal body. Terror could go no farther without the obliteration of reason; and in this paroxysm he heard a knocking at his chamber door: it was a soft, gentle, solicitous sound. He listened; an interval ensued; again the timid and fearful application was repeated. He attempted to rise; but his shaking limbs refused to sustain him. He attempted to cry, "Come in!" but his voice only uttered a brutish and unintelligible gibber. It had, however, the effect intended. The door was opened by the person that claimed admittance, and Elspeth came forwards with an obscurely-burning untrimmed lamp in one hand, and a large rusty key in the other.

"I could not come to you earlier, and I was afraid to enter lest you had fallen asleep, and that I might disturb you, for it is my particular duty to lock the hall-door, and to bear the key

to my lady. It is the custom and the order of the household, and when the key has been delivered, no footstep must be heard within the house until the seneschal has rung the morning bell."

"Sit down," said Rizzio, "I am glad you have come, and thrice glad that you have disturbed me; for though I was not asleep, I have had dreams. The night-mare, has been upon me, as if the vapour of some spell of witchcraft, or of necromancy, had infected my brain. Ave Maria, I am glad you have come."

"Bethink you well," said Elspeth, setting down the lamp on the table, and fixing the key in her girdle, "bethink you well what you would ask me before you do so, for I cannot but reply to you truly; I may not equivocate."

"Then," said Rizzio, "you are conscious of some communion with the intelligences of futurity?"

"I said not so," replied she, chattering her yellow teeth, and looking from under her shaggy beetle brows, with eyes that glimmered like red intense embers of fire; "I have seen things pass by long before their temporal advent; and I have had fearful intimations."

"Then I beseech you," said Rizzio, "if there is aught of fate that you can discern impending over me, tell me what you see?"

Elspeth made no reply, but looked at him with a strange restlessness of eye, and once or twice she appeared to shudder, and to draw her hand over her face, like one that is in doubt if the sight beheld be real.

"Ask me," she then said, "no questions. Be it enough for you to know that the shaft is yet in the bow-string which is destined to drink your heart's blood."

"Nay," said Rizzio, "do not fancy that I may be frightened with oracular sentences. I have long been prepared to endure a violent death—it has been foretold—I expect it—I await it; come when it may, I shall not be unprepared."

"If you are so well warned," replied Elspeth, "wherefore do you ask to know more?" and in saying these words, she uttered, with a shudder, a wild low strange sound, something between a shriek and a groan, and passed her hand rapidly over his breast as if brushing away something that she saw there.

"What mean you?" exclaimed Rizzio.

"It was a hand with a dagger, and on the ring finger was a dark seal, a talisman or amulet."

"Hah!" cried Rizzio, "Lord Ruthven wears a ring of that kind, a magical gem which one of his ancestors brought from the wars in Palestine, a blood-stone, traced with the unhallowed signs of Arabian sorcery; and he is my enemy."

"Good night," said Elspeth, rising, "Good night. You have had the prediction before—this is the second warning—look well to the third!" At these words she lifted the lamp, and with a frightful utterance of something that was intended for commiseration, but which harrowed him like derision, she suddenly retired.

CHAPTER XL.

"For me, I stand alone
Here in the world; nought know I of the feeling
That binds the husband to a wife and children;
My name dies with me, my existence ends."

THE PICCOLOMINI.

BEFORE the break of day, when the seneschal rung his morning bell, there was a stir in the castle; the servants of their Majesties were all a-foot, and a noise of preparation murmured everywhere; the grooms were busy with their horses, and the cooks were rousing their fires for a becoming and lordly breakfast. But though none of the royal train, either ladies or gentlemen, had peered from their chamber doors, the all-considerate lady of Dalmahoy, on hospitable cares intent, was whispering admonitions of order and quietude to her handmaids.

The morning opened with a beauty beyond the season, for the winter was still on the ground and in the air. The clouds of the preceding night had passed away, and the cheerful morning star rose, marshalling the sun like a herald of glad tidings. The wind was at rest, and the trees were encrusted with hoar frost; the birds were all mute, and only sounds of business, or toil, or duty disturbed the stillness of the time. Rizzio was one of the earliest who left his chamber, and by his haggard appearance it was evident he had passed a sleepless night. He ordered his horses to be ready, that when the drawbridge was let down he might proceed before the Court.

Perhaps he had never before that morning been so sensible of his friendless and forlorn condition. The reconciliation of the King and Queen, notwithstanding his persuasion that he had incurred the enmity of the latter, did not so much trouble him as might have been expected, for he was persuaded it could not last long. But it might, he thought, be sufficient to give his more consistent and steadier enemies time and opportunity to work his overthrow. He counted one by one, in his recollection, all the great men of the state, to whom he had endeavoured to recommend himself by his talents, his knowledge, and an endeavour to evince his wish to serve them; but among them all he could not determine on one that he might call a friend; and, in consequence, he thought to himself that "surely indeed my destiny is about to be consummated, for it is impossible that I can have reached this barren extremity, this waste and heath of fortune, without speedily experiencing some great change. Behind me I behold only rivals, adversaries, and enemies, closing in from all sides; they are coming down upon me, and I stand upon the verge of a precipice;—escape is impossible! And wherefore is it that I am placed in such optionless jeopardy? if I have borne myself too proudly what have I done that shall hereafter be imputed to me as a fault? what record of unworthiness will be found against me in the chronicles of Scotland, when time shall have quenched the personal enmities that burn against me? What can I say, but that I was a favourite, and honoured with the Queen's confidence, when she herself had no other friend?"

He was standing on the steps of the hall-door when these indignant thoughts were rising in his mind. It happened, that in the midst of his ruminations, the drawbridge was lowered for the day, and the portcullis hoisted; a number of peasants, who were waiting on the outside until the gates were free, came in, partly with little presents of kine to the old Countess, but chiefly to see their Majesties. Among them Rizzio observed a person muffled in his cloak, and his face partly concealed in a light scarf, which he wore round his throat on account of the rawness of the morning air. His appearance, which was portly, and not without dignity, particularly interested the Italian, and after two or three scrutinizing glances he discovered that the stranger was Auchenbrae. His character was not unknown to him, nor the degree of favour which he enjoyed with the King.

The conclusion which he drew from the appearance of Auchenbrae at that particular time, ought to have given him

satisfaction, had his mind run in its wonted channel ; but the predictions, if such they might be called, of Elspeth, had caused it to flow into desultory trains of thought, which, without bearing on any specific object, were yet dark, troubled, and overcast. He felt and feared the presence or approach of some unknown peril : but independent of this superstitious dread, he had just reason to think that the appearance of Auchenbrae was no ordinary casualty ; he, however, deemed it expedient not to recognise him, and yet he resolved to track him with vigilance, and in this cautious determination he was confirmed by observing that Auchenbrae, regardless of his birth and connexions, avoided the hall, but lingered about the court. He did not forget himself so far as to court any kind of companionship with the servants, but still he affected a sequestration from every body that could not be long practised without being observed.

In the course of a short time, one of the King's special servants came into the court, and upon being beckoned by Auchenbrae to come towards him, a few words passed in a whisper between them. The servant then immediately returned into the interior of the Castle, and having been absent a short time, he came back as if he had been the bearer of a message ; when he rejoined Auchenbrae, a short conversation took place between them, at the end of which they returned into the hall together. Rizzio involuntarily followed them, and observed that Auchenbrae was conducted up the great stairs, and to that part of the Castle where the King and Queen had passed the night. A short interval ensued, and Auchenbrae came down the stairs and went straight to the gate, crossed the drawbridge, and mounting his horse, which a mounted groom held by the bridle, rode quickly away.

The palfreys and horses of the ladies and courtiers who were to ride to Linlithgow were duly prepared ; an ample repast, befitting the season and the hospitality of the lady of the house, was spread and partaken of, and in due season the Court, being on horseback, left Dalmahoy.

It was observed that the Queen was in blither beauty than on the preceding day ; but the King's immediate attendants expressed their disappointment at the apparent chagrin which clouded his countenance ; and the one who had conducted Auchenbrae into his presence observed to his companions, that the discontent and alteration in his Majesty's appearance had been sudden, and caused by something which Auchenbrae had communicated.

The Court moved forward, and although it was discovered that the Queen perceived the sullenness of the King's humour, it was seen that she yet studiously avoided the hazard of noticing it. Thus, by a little address on her part, and the seconding which her endeavour to maintain the general gayety received, the party reached Linlithgow Palace without any particular occurrence arising in the course of the journey to occasion observation. Rizzio, however, was startled, when, on alighting at the gate, he saw Auchenbrae there, no longer affecting concealment, but dressed in his gayest attire. It struck him, however, as something indicative of a preconcerted design, that the King, who also saw Auchenbrae, and evidently recognised him, took no notice of his presence. The state of his mind and feelings led him to suspect that he was himself probably the object of their machination, and this idea put him on his guard. He saw, as it were, from that moment, with three eyes, and heard with three ears; while he endeavoured to preserve his serenity, by reasoning with himself that he must submit to fate, and that no resolution of his own could alter the tenor or complexion of his destiny.

CHAPTER XLI.

"It is to be a night of weight and crisis :
And something great and of long expectation
Is to make its procession in the heavens."

THE PICCOLOMINI.

IN the mean time, Southennan, with Knockwhinnie, had conveyed Adelaide to Linlithgow, where her grandmother, the Lady Kilburnie, then resided. Their intention was to remain there, until the mother of Southennan could be brought from the West country to be present at the marriage, after which it was proposed, that the young couple should proceed to visit Southennan's maternal relations in England, and then pass over to Normandy, where they intended to take up their abode for some time; not doubting that in the course of a few months, Darnley, whose light affections never rested long on one object, would soon forget his guilty attachment to the bride.

The arrival of the Court was an unforeseen event, and calculated to derange this plan; both Southennan and Knockwhinnie, nevertheless, resolved to adhere to their original in-

tentions. They deemed it, however, expedient to avoid all intercourse with the courtiers ; but this was not practicable, for, in the course of an hour it had been communicated to the Queen, that Adelaide was already in the town, and with the Lady Kilburnie ; intelligence which tended materially to diminish the enjoyment which her Majesty had anticipated from the excursion. The King also, besides the information which he had received from Auchenbrae, was informed from some other quarter of the same circumstance.

Southennan, seeing that he had not secured his bride from insult by removing her from Edinburgh, justly thought, were he to remain with her so near the Court, some new molestation might arise from it, and that at all events, she could not avoid waiting on the Queen. His situation thus became more embarrassed even than it had been, and it required some decisive step to extricate him from the labyrinth of difficulties in which he was involved. No sooner had he taken this view of the case, than he suggested to Adelaide that she should wait on the Queen, and, without reference to what the consequences might be, explain the unhappiness to which the persecution of Darnley exposed her. Accordingly it was agreed, that in the evening Adelaide, accompanied by the Lady Kilburnie, should visit the Queen in private, and solicit Her Majesty's special protection.

But while it was arranged to counteract the profligate designs of Darnley, he and his coadjutors were not idle. The anxious vigilance with which Rizzio watched the proceedings of Auchenbrae enabled him to discover that some project was on foot, the execution of which was to take place that night. His apprehensions, as we have stated, induced him to conclude that the undertaking was directed against himself ; but when he had ascertained that the preparations chiefly consisted of having horses in readiness for a journey, he concluded differently, especially when he heard that Adelaide was in the town.

It could hardly be said that Rizzio was at any time actuated by disinterested motives ; and on this occasion it was perhaps not uncharitable to suppose, that the humiliations to which he had been recently subjected, as much as friendship for Southennan or respect for Adelaide, influenced him to warn the former of his suspicion. Giving, however, a fair interpretation to his motives, and supposing something of commiseration, as well as resentment for the treatment he had personally suffered, really to have affected him, he took an opportunity early in the twilight of the evening to visit Southennan.

"I know not," said he, "what to advise you to do; for you have to deal with intrepidity in Auchenbrae and with profligacy in the King; but one thing is very obvious; they calculate on carrying off the lady, and the only security against that violence is for her never to move abroad without adequate protection."

While they were thus conversing, a message came from the Queen requesting the attendance of Adelaide. Southennan was surprised, and said to Rizzio,

"This is strange, for some time ago a servant of the Lady Kilburnie was sent to her Majesty to solicit an audience, and he brought back a reply fixing the hour about this time."

Rizzio, after reflecting for a moment, said,

"This is a stratagem. It is plainly intended to intercept the Lady Adelaide, and to convey her away. It must be met with ingenuity and craft on your part."

"How, or in what way?" exclaimed Southennan. In this crisis Hughoc came in considerably agitated to his master, and indicated a wish to speak with him alone.

"Say at once what you have to tell. It can be no secret here," said Southennan.

Hughoc then related that he had heard Auchenbrae had engaged a young woman to attend a lady who was to be that evening removed from the palace across the Queen's-ferry, and he mentioned also other circumstances, which left no doubt as to the lady whom they intended to carry off.

Rizzio during the recital appeared thoughtful, but once or twice he was observed to smile, and when Hughoc had ended he said to him,

"Are you willing to run some little risk to serve your master?"

"I would be an unco' servant if I wouldna'," replied the lad.

"Then Southennan," said the Italian, "we must get up a mask on this occasion. Your servant is not remarkably stout; let him be dressed as your bride, and send him with proper attendants to the Palace, in obedience to the message you have received. If it be as we suspect, he can bear the result. If no guilt is intended, no harm can come to him."

Hughoc was mightily pleased with this suggestion, and Southennan went immediately to stop Adelaide and the Lady Kilburnie from their visit, until the effect of this stratagem was ascertained.

As soon as the twilight had faded, the wind being bleak and strong, Hughoc, wrapped in a mantle and attended by Knock-

whinnie, proceeded towards the Palace. As they passed behind the church towards the southern gate, one of the King's servants came to Knockwhinnie, and began to ask him something like a confidential question. Presently several others came up, and parted Knockwhinnie from his supposed daughter, whom another party surrounded, and much probably to their surprise, found the lady willing to go with them. In the course of a few minutes she was placed on horseback before Auchenbrae, who, with a considerable retinue, among whom the voice of Rough Tam was heard, set off at a brisk rate on the Queen's-ferry road. Knockwhinnie, to the surprise of those into whose hands he had fallen, evinced no agitation at the abduction; but instead of going forward into the Palace, quietly returned to the residence of the Lady Kilburnie, and related what had taken place.

The success of this stratagem, so far, amused Southennan as well as the ladies; but Rizzio, who was still with them, appeared affected with considerable alarm.

"If," said he, "I be suspected of having had any hand in this adventure, I may count on the King's avenging it. It will be felt by him as an injury of the deepest kind, and the inevitable ridicule which will arise, when the trick is discovered, will sting him into unappeasable revenge. I must therefore hasten to the Palace, and conceal as well as I can that I have been here with you."

Accordingly he hastily quitted them, for his apprehension was well founded; but Fortune was not at the time auspicious. On leaving the house he observed one of the King's confidential menials lingering in the street, as if watching the door, and he fell in with several others in his way to the Palace-gate, which left no doubt it would soon be reported to Darnley that he was with Southennan when the trick was played.

The Lady Kilburnie, who was shrewd, and, notwithstanding her age, spirited, suggested to Adelaide that they still ought to attend the audience they had solicited. Accordingly, at the time appointed, being dressed for the occasion, accompanied by Knockwhinnie and Southennan, they proceeded to the Palace. Southennan, however, went no farther than the gate, but lingered on the esplanade before it, and while leisurely walking there, overheard expressions of wonder and surprise escape from among the servants who were lounging at the gate, at the sight of Adelaide passing into the court, the cause of which he was at no loss to understand.

CHAPTER XLII.

"What noise is this?"

ROMEO AND JULIET.

THE Queen listened to the complaint of Adelaide with more equanimity than might have been expected from the natural liveliness of her feelings and the violence of her conjugal attachment. Previous circumstances had indeed prepared her for the communication, and the caprice and obstinacy of Darnley's conduct for some time, and particularly during the journey, had done much to abate the fervour of her rash and imprudent passion. Still she felt the humiliation of scorned affection, and the thought of the public knowing that she was so slighted, after having conferred on him so many tokens of woman's love and regal generosity, sank with rankling anguish deeply in her bosom.

"I will think, my sweet Adelaide," said she, "of what you have told, and I will take care that you shall be so openly fenced from farther insult, that even in my profaned and unhappy house none shall dare to molest you. Alas! it is the language of a lowly assurance to be able to say only so much. I can, however, foresee that the King will not long honour us with his company. He grudges too evidently the little civility which he condescends to bestow, that I expect it will soon be altogether withheld. I rejoice, however, at the stratagem which has been practised on Auchenbrae; and I trust the discovery will be made so public as to cover all the guilty parties with inextinguishable ridicule."

While her Majesty was thus speaking, Darnley, with the Earl of Morton, entered the room. Seeing Adelaide there, he stood petrified, as if in the presence of an apparition. The Earl, who was not in the secret of his plot with Auchenbrae, viewed him with amazement; and the Queen, beholding how much he was disconcerted, though her whole spirit was inflamed with indignation, could not repress a disposition to indulge her satire and derision.

"Your Majesty," said she, "looks as if you beheld a wraith;

but I assure you this is the true Adelaide, wherever you may think there is another."

Darnley perceived that the Queen was aware of Auchenbrae's stratagem, but could not divine how it happened that Adelaide was there, after the assurance he had received of her having been carried off; and dreading the wit and sarcasms of the Queen, he abruptly retired. Her Majesty laughed at his confusion; but it was with a flushed and vivid expression of contempt that she inquired of the Earl of Morton if he had heard the news, meaning the plot, the particulars of which she sarcastically recapitulated.

"Na," replied Morton: "this beats cock-fechting."

The Lady Kilburnie, a jocose old dowager, very different indeed from the stately paragon his mother, the dame of Dalmahoy, replied,

"Well said, my Lord; it's between a cock and a hen."

The Earl perceived, that under the assumed gayety of the Queen, her heart was far from being quiet, and he repressed his inclination to jocularity, with more delicacy of sentiment than he was generally supposed to possess.

"I grieve," said he, after a brief pause, "that your Majesty should be thus molested. Really, the King is overly head-strong, and needs a curb. Ye'll hae to gie his snaffle a sharp tug; for it's no decent that a married man should gie himself up to sic gallanting."

The Queen, who had a dread of the freedom with which the Earl allowed himself to talk on such subjects, endeavoured to check the vein into which he was falling, by observing,

"I think, my Lord, the present is an occasion in which your friendly remonstrances might serve his Majesty; for it is not only derogatory to all propriety, but so great a blemish to his own dignity, that it cannot be suffered to proceed farther under the same roof with me. Here I have taken this young lady, my friend, under my protection, and if she is not safe with me, her enemies must retire to some other place."

"Hey," cried the Earl, "this is blowing the trumpet of war. Na, na, your Majesty, ye'll hae to learn how to wink."

During this scene, the Queen was often violently agitated, and at this familiar expression she said, with great severity,

"My Lord, I request you will go to the King, inform him what I have said, and request his decision on the spot: he must either pledge his honour that Adelaide shall be no farther molested, or find some other house for his residence than that where I reside. Stirling or Falkland are tenantless; but re-

mote Dunstaffnage is a fitter place for one who so little respects the common courtesies of civil life."

"Will your Majesty," said the Lady Kilburnie, "permit me to put in a word? I was more than thirty years a married wife, and I speak little ill of my dear deceased Lord Kilburnie, when I say he had a temper and ways of his own: I never, however, saw good come of excessive severity on my part. We have all a duty to perform to the world, as well as to please ourselves. Kings and Queens, please your Majesty, stand on high pedestals, and the infection of example from them should be well considered in their actions."

Adelaide at this remark began to weep and deplore, with the accent of extreme grief, that she should have been the cause of such distress to her royal mistress.

"If it be your Majesty's will and pleasure," said Morton, gravely, "I will go to the King, and deliver your message to the very syllable; but what's to come o't? Ye turn him out o' the door like an ill-doer, and for what? For this lassie. Now, as my Leddy Kilburnie weel kens, is there a discreet wife within the four corners o' Scotland that will no' say it was a hasty job? Maybe there might be found a way o' southering this rent between you and the King. Ye must do something to cook him a little better. Ye ken he has lang been greenin for the matrimonial crown: now, if your Majesty was to make that a condition for his good behaviour, it's wonderful how smoothly a' things might then go between you."

Mary regarded him with astonishment, and then said,

"No, I do not complain of his ungrateful return for what I have already bestowed; but he has taught me that it has been too much. Never, my Lord Morton, again make that proposition."

Morton bowed with profound reverence and retired.

Scarcely had he quitted the room when a noise of riot and laughter, and the trampling of horses, was heard in the court below, intermingled with violent expressions of rage, while flashes of light from flambeaux and torches gleamed on the ceiling of the room.

The Queen hastily arose, and unbarred the casement of her window, to hear from what cause the tumult arose. It came from Auchenbrae's party, intermingled with a crowd of menials and domestics, who had followed them on through the gates. Above the general din the voice of Auchenbrae was heard; but it was suddenly interrupted; and the court being ordered by the constable of the palace to be cleared, quiet was

restored. The Queen, however, did not close her casement, but stood some time at the open window in silence. The Lady Kilburnie sympathized with her abstraction, and observing that she several times hastily wrung her hands, would have disturbed her rumination; but Adelaide, better acquainted with her Majesty's habits, tacitly interposed, and by a sign restrained her from interfering. After a short interval, the Queen herself closed the casement, and when she turned round to the light it appeared she had been weeping: she made, however, no remark on the occurrence which had disturbed their conversation, but, evidently struggling to subdue her emotion, led the conversation to topics of indifference and cheerfulness. Nature was, however, too highly excited to be controlled; for on the occasion of some light incidental observation, which the old Lady facetiously made to second the Queen's endeavour to be gay, her Majesty suddenly burst into tears, and falling on the shoulder of Adelaide, wept bitterly.

Relieved by her tears, she became serene but thoughtful; and somewhat imputing blame to herself for yielding to such undignified weakness, she requested Adelaide to remain with her for the night, and the Dowager retired into the ante-chamber, where Knockwhinnie was waiting to conduct her home.

CHAPTER XLIII.

"This may do something."

OTHELLO.

WHILE Southennan was walking on the esplanade in front of the Palace, waiting the return of Knockwhinnie and the ladies, Johnnie Gaff, who was in attendance on his master, came to him and said,

"Heard ye, Southennan, ever o' such a ploy? Auchenbrae, wha aince ran awa frae me *nudy pactay*, has, wi' other *fairy natury*, carried aff out o' the King's yett a leddy o' high degree, as some say; others that she's but a spunkie, for aneath her gay mantle she had a man's boots."

This was no new intelligence; but Southennan affected to be more interested in it than he really felt, and expressed his

surprise that such an outrage could be committed within the verge and purlieu of the royal residence.

"Deed," replied Johnnie, "its a great *lacuna* in gude order ; but it comes o' the King's flunkies being Englishers and other Pagans out o' foreign parts."

Just at this juncture of the conversation the clattering of hoofs in haste was heard coming towards them, and presently Hughoc made his appearance, and, recognising by the flambeaux at the gate his Master and Johnnie in conversation, he briskly alighted, bade Johnnie hold his horse, and untying his mantle flung it across the saddle. Almost in the same moment, before there was time for any one to make an observation, he whispered to his master to come away ; and thus Johnnie was left with the smoking horse, before he had time to rally his thoughts at the incident. A louder and more tumultuous din was also presently heard, and Auchenbrae, with some of his men, came around Johnnie on the esplanade. Without speaking they seized him as the fugitive, and dragged him into the guard-house within the gate of the Palace. It was the noise and disturbance of this affair which drew the Queen and the ladies to the window.

"What has happened," said Southennan to his lad, when they reached an obscure part of the esplanade : "how is it you have run away and come back here?"

"Deed, sir!" replied Hughoc, "I had nae will in the matter. When I was laid across the horse before him, and they set aff at the gallop, I couldna bear the pommel o' the saddle, but I tholed as lang as possible till the horse stumbled in gang-ing thro' a burn, which made me in an agony cry out in my natural voice, 'Lord's curse!' for I thought my inside was shaken out. Auchenbrae gied a louder shout than mine, and tried to throw me down ; but I gripped him by the belt and jerkin, and at the same time catching hold o' the bridle, hault him wi' me to the ground. He was a thought stunned by the fall, and before he gathered his heels I was in the saddle and aff. No' an inch o' the road did I ken, even if it had been fair daylight ; sae I allowed the beast to take its ain way, admonishing him by heel and hand to the best o' my ability. Od, its a clever brute, and brought me along like the deil in a whirlwind ! I heard a rising sough behind me, and tho' I had nae spurs, I trow there was nae want o' metal in my heels : sae I rode and they rode, and the houses and the hedges flew past like witches riding on besoms to Noraway. But Maister, I doubt somebody will hae a braw lawing to pay for this sport ;

for I heard Auchenbrae tell my new friend, Rough Tam, that to Tam's ain share the booty o' this night's raid wouldna be less than a hundred merks. Od, they will be a pair o' fule-looking men when they find the like o' Johnnie Gaff instead o' me. I wonder what the King will say when he sees such a kirk steeple o' upright deformity, instead of the ledgy Adelaide. I'm sure I couldna keep frae laughing in his face, if I was to hae my head choppit aff for't the next minute."

In the mean time, the noise had brought to the windows in the court of the Palace all its inmates, with lights and flambeaux in their hands, and shouts of laughter began to rise at the remonstrances and expostulations of Johnnie Gaff, declaring his ignorance and innocence of the whole affair; while Auchenbrae, maddened by the sneers and ridicule of the grooms and menials, could scarcely give utterance to his rage. The Earl of Morton was standing at the same window with the King, and perceiving something of the truth of the affair, could not restrain his jocularly on so rich an occasion; but Darnley was incapable of brooking any thing like mirth at that moment. He saw that by the return of Auchenbrae the affair could not be withheld from the public, and he writhed with the dread of the ridiculous tale of such a figure as Johnnie Gaff having been substituted for his dalliance instead of Knockwhinnie's fair and gentle daughter. His mind in consequence was heated to the utmost, and his rage vented itself in involuntary monosyllables, as intense and implacable as the sparks which spring spontaneously from the red and glowing iron, scintillating from the forge.

In the midst of this burning and combustion of thought, he suddenly recollected what he had been told by the servant, who had seen Rizzio come from Southennan and Knockwhinnie at the time when the stratagem was carrying into effect; and with one of those lucid conjectures which like glances of light afford an instantaneous vision of the truth, he ascribed the failure of the stratagem and its absurd result to some interposition of the Italian, and fiercely clenching his hands, exclaimed,

"I will have bloody revenge for this. He shall die, had he fifty lives!"

Morton, startled and aghast at his demoniac violence, inquired, in a subdued tone, and with a degree almost of diffidence, to whom he alluded. The altered voice and visage of the Earl had an immediate effect, and, with an effort to master his vehemence, Darnley replied,

"I mean that he deserves to die—the enemy of Scotland—the poison in my cup—the minion of the Queen. Hah! the favourite of my wife."

This insinuation, which was too significantly given to be mistaken, produced a momentary consternation in Morton. It was a thought that had never before been suggested either by fancy or malevolence. He stepped with rapid stride close to Darnley, laid his hand firmly on his arm, and with a troubled look exclaimed,

"What would your Majesty? What cause hae ye ever had for that suspicion?"

"Have you not seen," said Darnley in reply, "with what scorn she rejects the advice of every other. How she clings to him, as if he were her all in all."

"Pardon me," said Morton, unable to overcome his surprise, "without some evidence it's a thought which shouldna be uttered."

"I want," replied the King, "no other evidence than the experience I have had of her alienated affections. She contemns me; she treats me with less consideration than a menial."

Weak, rash, and vindictive as Morton well knew Darnley to be, there was something so monstrous in this perversion of fact, and while the Palace was ringing with the outrage which his licentiousness had instigated, that even his own lax principles revolted at the insinuation, and made him grave and solemn far beyond the habitude of his character.

He perceived that the King's jealousy, if so random an accusation could be regarded as any proof of the existence in him of that miserable passion, placed him entirely in his power; and he saw also an opening for the gratification of the hatred with which the haughty and aspiring Italian had so long exasperated him. But at that time he deemed it prudent only to entreat the King to proceed with vigilance and caution, warning him that the dishonour of the Queen could not be breathed to the kingdom without exciting the most dreadful consequences. All this seriousness was, however, dictated by craft, and the admonitions were given to excite the germ of that jealousy from which, feignedly or felt, the King appeared to suffer.

CHAPTER XLIV.

"Meagre were his looks,—
Green earthen pots, bladders, and musty seeds,
And old cakes of roses."

SHAKESPEARE.

ON leaving the King, the Earl of Morton went to the lodgings of the Lord Ruthven, an ancient dark-turreted mansion near to St. Michael's Fountain. The lower part of the house was without windows towards the street, and those of the first floor were small square port-hole looking apertures. The entrance was by a vaulted gateway, which was shut for the night, but the Earl having knocked and made himself known, was admitted and conducted up stairs.

He found Lord Ruthven reclining sick on a couch; he had for some time enjoyed but indifferent health, and was that evening more severely attacked. On a table at his shoulder lay several papers of apothecaries' stuffs and other Esculapian pageantry. His temples were bound with a cloth, and being naturally meagre and sallow, his appearance indicated the presence of greater disease than he was actually suffering.

"What's the matter, Ruthven?" said Morton, on seeing him in this condition, "that ye're looking sae malegrugous."

"Not much," was the reply; "but I have felt a little worse to night, otherwise I should have been with you. Pray tell me, what has all this tumult at the Palace been about?"

"It is a ravelled hesp," replied the Earl, "and will take patience and perseverance to wind a clew out o't. I ken few o' the particulars, but I guess its some pandering for the King, and that he has been disappointed. But, Ruthven, I hae something o' mair importance to say. Hae ye e'er observed the Queen casting a sheep's-e'e at that pawkie deevil Dauvit?"

"How! never. When has this come up?"

"I'm glad to hear you say sae," replied Morton, "and I beg you will no appear to hae heard any thing about it, especially frae me, if the King should speak to you anent it."

"You surprise me," rejoined Ruthven; "that cursed Italian

has been a serpent sent among us ; I wish we were well rid of him."

"It'll be no long, I trow, for the King has sworn to be his death."

"And more than the King," replied Ruthven, grimly, "I'm not to be insulted with impunity."

"Whisht, whisht! dinna exert yoursel'. It's no' a task for a private hand, nor can it weel be done in course o' law, seeing that, although his pride is no langer to be endured, he hasna just been guilty enough to be cast in a trial. But if he maun be put out of the way, and I dinna see how it can be avoided, it should be done wi' becoming solemnity. For my part I hae tholed at his hands such insolence, as would hae been enough in better times, to hae made the banes o' our auld Scottish barons rattle wi' rage in their coffins."

"But if it be, Morton, as you say, that the Queen has an unlawful partiality for him ; it's an undertaking of more peril that we are thinking."

"That's no' to be doubted, if we fail : but the Queen isna without a modicum o' sagacity ; and if we take right care to fasten a judicious suspicion upon her, she'll keep a calm sough."

"Do you think it possible that the King would join us?"

"He'll promise, and if we keep at him, I doubtna he'll do his part ; but he's such a weathercock, that naebody can count upon his executing any purpose."

"Still," said Ruthven, "he must be one of us. If we cannot be sure of his hand at the dagger, we must have it at the pen before embarking in the business, which I look upon to be a vindication of private wrong, and a removal of a great public grievance : there must be a compact ; and we shall not be safe unless we have the King's name to the paction. But if there be no well-founded cause to suspect the Queen's conduct, it cannot stand consistent with honour that we should invent any story to the prejudice of her fame as a lady."

"I'm sure," replied Morton, "the thought o't never entered my head."

"And," said Ruthven, "I never heard of it before. Who told you ? for on that tale must hinge our proceedings."

Morton evaded the question by saying, "Let us end the matter for the present, and in the morning, when we see the King, we shall learn more o' the rights o' Dauvit's gallanting."

Ruthven being a good deal exhausted, Morton bade him good night, satisfied that he had so well ascertained his willingness

to join in what he believed to be a meritorious enterprize ; he then returned to the Palace, where he was lodged, and in passing to his chamber met Rizzio going with a light in his hand, also to his.

"Weel, Dauvit," said the Earl, "I'm blithe to see thee ;—and if thou canst spare half-an-hour frae thy bed, I would fain waste it in a crack."

Rizzio had from his last interview with Morton and Ruthven resolved to alter his behaviour towards them, and to put on a demeanour of greater ceremony ; instead, therefore, of answering the Earl with his wonted familiarity, he simply bowed in acquiescence to the proposal, and walked back to the chamber which was appropriated to his official duties : on entering it he placed a chair for the Earl, without taking another for himself.

"Hey dey !" cried Morton ; "the post may get a hag for this. What's come o'er thee the night ? I hope that this new parade, Dauvit, doesna' come o' any malice that thou hast been clecking against me. Gude save 's ! is't a fœdum afore death ?"

"My Lord is pleased to be facetious," said Rizzio dryly, without making any other remark.

"Sit ye down, Dauvit, there can be nae friendship where there is such an overplus o' ceremony."

"Friendship !" exclaimed the Italian with a slight sarcastic inflection of his voice ; adding, "I rejoice in all the friendship with which my Lord is pleased to honour me."

"Come, come, Dauvit ; nane o' thae tantrums : thou knowst that my bark is waur than my bite ; and I would fain hope that it'll no be lang till there's a better understanding between us. Howsever, Dauvit, what I wanted wi' you was to inquire about this exploit o' that vagabond Auchenbrae. It's no' in the course o' nature that the Queen can see and hear o' such clandestine immorality going on, as it were, in her very dish, and no feel the exasperation o' a woman and a wife, to say naething o' a Queen. Nae gude, Dauvit can come o't."

Rizzio, resting his hand on the back of the chair near to which he was standing, replied, seriously,

"It is much to be regretted that the King should be so little circumspect in his amours."

"Gude sake, Dauvit ! is he that way given ?" cried Morton, with a look of such well-affected droll dubiety, that Rizzio was taken off his guard, and sat down in the chair. "The scoundrel," continued Morton, "ought to get his droddum dressed. If he gang on at that rate he'll break the Queen's heart, or

make her take revenge. But I hope, Dauvit, to speak wi' sobriety, that her Majesty doesna' take his bull-wavering overly to heart ; because, if she does, it will be necessary for her Council to interfere, and gie the young man an admonition."

Rizzio was too well acquainted with the depth and cunning of the facetious statesman not to discern that there was some intent at the bottom of his apparent confidential freedom, and accordingly he replied guardedly :

"Whatever distress the loose conduct of the King may occasion, I am sure her majesty will suffer much before she complains ; nor is it likely that she would ever condescend to do so to me."

"Now, Dauvit, that's what I would, if ye would let me, call a whid : for if a' tales be true, there's no ane, in the Court or out the Court, that she mair respects, and I'm sure ye weel deserve it ; for having neither kith nor kin in the country, ye can afford to do justice among a' parties, and stick closer by her than if ye were ane o' her natural born lieges."

"Her situation is one of great difficulty, and she has not such friends about her as her unhappy circumstances require," replied Rizzio ; and fixing his eye steadily on the Earl, added, "We have all cause to repent of the part we took in consenting so easily to this unfortunate match."

"We?" echoed Morton, as if to repel the equality it implied. But he had a purpose to accomplish, and mastered the momentary resentment, saying, "I wash my hands o' the business ; for weel may you recollect that I continued in my obstinacy, as it was called, till the very last. But what I wanted to say, Dauvit, was this : it has been told me that the Queen has manifested a great decay o' affection towards the King. Now, after the vehement love that she had for him, this canna' come without cause ; and my experience in the nature o' womankind assures me that it's no' altogether owing to the neglect she suffers.—Think ye, Dauvit, that there is any fallow about the Court that has cast the glammour o'er her."

"My Lord is plain in speech," replied Rizzio. But if I had observed, or fancied such a thing, could I say so without better proof than my own thoughts?"

"Weel," replied the Earl, a little baffled by the wariness of this answer, "thou's an auld farrant chappie, and would make a jealous man think, considering thy craftiness, that thou had'st maybe a finger in the pie thyself."

The Italian, who had during the whole of this conversation perceived that the Earl was pursuing some object, was struck

with this remark ; it apprized him more than he had either apprehended or dreamed of ; and to make his answer the more emphatic, he rose and walked once across the room, and then returning to his former place behind the chair on which he had been sitting, said, fervently,

" My Lord has more than once before treated me as if I were insensible to honour. Out of deference to his rank and consideration in the state, I have stifled my feelings ; but in this instance he has exceeded all allowable license."

Morton made no answer, but starting from his seat left the room, making the floor shake with his tread.

CHAPTER XLV.

" When I consider life, 'tis all a cheat,
Yet, fooled by hope, men favour the deceit."

DRYDEN.

MOST men, even the least observant, meet with eddies in the current of life, and when perplexed in them, find themselves under the influence of a control which they cannot resist.— Every thing then seems in such conjectures to be turned away, and under the fallacious conception that Fate may be overcome, they struggle to extricate themselves ; but the more they do so they become, like a bird in the fowler's net, more and more entangled. There can indeed be no greater error in the practice of life, than that of supposing a man may, of his effort, change the course of his fortunes ; while there is no truth more certain than that the stream keeps on its destined channel, despite of all the individual attempts to mar it. It was by observing this fact that Lord Bacon ascertained the truth of his great moral dogma, viz. that if a man can afford to wait he will be seldom disappointed, and that what we call disappointments are but the abortions of endeavours to attain our ends without adequate means and preparations.

The events of the important night which Mary and Darnley passed at Linlithgow brought on one of those combinations of circumstances in which human wisdom is of least avail. Instead of waiting to see what would have been the result in the morning of Auchenbrae's frustration, almost every one of the

party interested adopted an independent course, and the consequence was collision in the effects of their resolutions.

Darnley, ashamed and mortified at the result of his stragem, determined to avoid the ridicule to which he was conscious of being exposed, by returning early in the morning to Edinburgh, where he directed the Earl of Morton to join him in the evening. The Queen, somewhat indisposed, agreed to remain at Linlithgow. Knockwhinnie deemed it expedient that his daughter should be altogether removed from the hazards of the court ; but to this Southennan was opposed, for, whether judiciously or not, he regarded the King's power as less in the vicinity of her Majesty than at a distance, where his name was more revered.

But of all those who were thus embarrassed and in conflict, Rizzio felt himself the most so. He could no longer disguise his true situation from himself, if for a long time he had done so. His conversation with Morton during the preceding night had roused his fears to an apprehension of a wider and wilder danger than he had ever previously contemplated.

He had long seen that the lines of his life scarcely left him an option. If he remained in the Queen's service, many signs and symptoms taught him that his doom would soon be consummated. If he left it, as he often meditated, an inglorious and humble lot would circumscribe the sphere of his talents, and he imagined himself, by the sense he was daily experiencing of his comparative superiority, destined for higher action than the little offices of an Italian syndic, the utmost he could hope for in his own country. Thus, balancing in his mind whether to pursue the splendid career in which, hitherto, he had been so successful, and comparing its cares and troubles with the quietude of the humbler walk which he believed he might yet choose, he went in the morning to report the business of the day in his accustomed manner to the Queen.

He had passed a restless night ; his dark complexion had something of the faded hue of lassitude, and his eyes were heavy, and moved languidly, as if he at the moment were suffering from some corporeal malady. His whole appearance bore the impress of depression so visibly, that when he appeared in the Queen's presence, her Majesty was moved by the common feelings of humanity, to inquire what had befallen him that he appeared so exceedingly unwell.

" My disease, madam, is a common one," said he, " to those who are without friends. Your Majesty's gracious favour has shone upon me, not unenvied, and I fear will not much longer

be permitted. I perceive, madam, that I have failed to attract any friendship among those with whom my office requires me to act. I stand in their way; and while that is the case, I can only perform a small part of my duty to your Majesty."

"To what, Rizzio, does this prelude tend?" inquired the Queen, with a soft and saddened voice, for she anticipated that he was about to offer his resignation; and from the departure of Count Dufroy, she had no other whom she accounted her confidential adviser, especially in that correspondence with the Catholic powers and the Pope, which faith and predilection made her esteem as among the greatest of her regal duties.

The Italian, who, notwithstanding his numerous faults and defects, and especially his boundless arrogance, was deeply susceptible of kindness, and felt the sympathy which the Queen more by her manner than her language expressed, replied,

"Whatever is your Majesty's pleasure, I am ever ready to obey, but if my humble services could be performed without the necessity of intruding so much upon your private time, it might have the happy effect of mitigating that envy, of whose malice I have had some taste since the Count Dufroy returned to France."

The Queen, with a still gentler tone, said, "I will not disguise, Rizzio, that I have myself seen symptoms of that envy, and that the King grudges the confidence I place in you respecting my correspondence with the Duke of Alva, and his Holiness, thinking, that in that negotiation he should have been a chief adviser. Verily he ought to have been so, but he too early—" Her voice faltered, and a tear filled her eye, but not to overflowing. In a moment however, recovering, she added, "The trust I have placed in you assures you of my protection, which no one will dare to violate. While you remain with me there is no adversary whom you may fear. I am a timid woman, but all my ancestors have boasted courageous blood, and I am not unmindful of the dignity which, by the grace of God, I have inherited from so many kings."

Rizzio was affected to sadness by this gracious condescension! and kneeling, bent over her extended hand with profound emotion. At that moment the page in the anti-chamber announced the Earl of Morton; who coming abruptly forward, with his characteristic irreverence, saw part of this scene, and either feigned or was struck with great surprise. The Queen herself was not otherwise moved than to observe to him,

"I am grieved to find Rizzio unhappy in his condition. I pray you, Morton, if by accident or by prejudice you have been

accessary to his discomfort, that you will remember I have said there is not, I believe, in my service, one more trustworthy, nor has Scotland a more faithful friend."

"Your Majesty," said the Earl, coolly, "has great confidence in Dauvit, and what's for your contentation must be a pleasure to a' your lieges;" and he held out his hand, in token of reconciliation, to Rizzio.

"No, my Lord," said the Italian proudly, "the friendship of my Lord must hereafter be estimated by actions; professions may be wisely dispensed with in our reciprocities."

"Dauvit," replied the Earl, with a look that divulged how little of peace or amity was in his bosom, "It'll no be lang till ye hae lasting proof o' my friendship and the sincerity o' my regard."

This, nor the look with which it was accompanied, was intended to be understood by the Queen. But that quick-sightedness for which she was so celebrated, had apprized her, from the moment Morton entered, that some recent dissension had arisen between them, and she beheld, with a degree of dread, the lowering and malignant look with which his equivocal expressions of regard were uttered.

"I will not, Morton," said she, "allow this to go farther. Go with Rizzio, and quietly discuss your difference, and come back together when you are reconciled."

The firmness with which this was expressed, forbade reply; and the Earl and Rizzio, retired, with no disposition, however, on either side, to comply with her wishes.

CHAPTER XLVI.

"The hour of retribution must be nigh."

CAUNTER.

MORTON returned in the morning to Edinburgh, and was followed in the course of the afternoon by Darnley and Ruthven. Whether this was the result of arrangement, or one of those fortuitous combinations of circumstances by which the current of events is helped forwards, it would serve but little purpose could we positively explain. It happened, however, that the same evening the King had a party at supper; and it

was remarked by the menials of the Palace that his guests consisted exclusively of persons who, save on state occasions, were rarely seen in his Majesty's company. Besides the Earl of Morton, the Lords Ruthven and Lindsay, together with Maitland of Lethington, were several others of less degree; all men of stout hearts and ready swords, ever alike willing and prepared for bold enterprises.

While they were at the table and the servants in the room, the Earl of Morton was more than usually facetious. He told his queerest stories, and laughed louder at them than his auditors; but it was thought his laugh was in some degree constrained; that it lacked the gayety of lightheartedness, and had more of the sound of a rattle than the cheerfulness of a joyous spirit. Ruthven sat solemn, erect, and rueful; no symptom of inward satisfaction mantled on his meagre and colourless visage. At times his eyelids fell, and he appeared wrapped in cogitation. Maitland was seemingly more at ease. He was possessed of a keen searching spirit; he cut open with the glance of his eye, as it is said, the bosoms of men, and read their naked hearts: but although he was undoubtedly a man of marvellous discernment, he seemed on this occasion to fail in his habitual firmness. The jocularly of Morton produced no other effect upon him than a kind of grave sullenness, which rejected the mirth as ill-timed.

There was also present George Douglass, a youth, half-brother to the Earl of Murray, the same who was afterward celebrated for assisting the Queen in her escape from Loch Leven Castle, a brave and steady youth. The stern blood of the Dark Douglasses circulated fiercely in his veins, and he was not only audacious for his years, but possessed that saturnine prudence for which his ancestors were so renowned. How he came to be among the royal guests assembled on this occasion history has failed to record; but it is probable he was one of the King's particular friends. It were, however, to do him wrong to regard him as belonging to that licentious association in which Darnley too much delighted. With them was also present Andrew Car, of Fawdenside, a rude, obstreperous, coarse, mannerless fellow, who recommended himself to the King by his fearless spirit and indiscriminative boldness. Several other persons, more distinguished for birth, bravery, and adventure, than for those qualities which do most honour to men of rank and influence, were also present.

During the time of supper, Darnley who was never distinguished for convivial accomplishments, appeared thoughtful,

almost dejected ; and in one of these fits of disregard of the comfort of others into which he too often allowed himself to fall, he started from table and walked hurriedly into another apartment, and, returning as abruptly, resumed his seat without explanation, greatly to the amazement of his guests. At last, supper being finished and the servants retired, Morton, who led on the occasion, circulated the flagons of sack and hippocras, and seemed anxious to exalt the hilarity of the company ; but still there was something of an ungracious method in all that took place. It plainly related to an undivulged business, and twice or thrice there was a pause in the mirth, and the guests looked at one another as if expecting some proposition to be offered to their consideration ; but as often as this happened, after a short pause Morton revived the conversation, and led it on to new topics, in which, though he had no participators, all appeared to be seriously listening ; but it was with absent minds and unhearing ears.

The wine, however, was gradually in the mean while acquiring its wonted predominance. The guests generally spoke more freely, and those who were the more intimate friends of Darnley treated him with less and less ceremony. But still something in the manners of all indicated expectation, and this was particularly the case when Morton, seeing the candles burning dim and the flagons ebbing, ordered a new supply both of light and wine.

"Let us hae," said he, "a new supply o' the wine to wet our whistles, for mine's gizened ; and the light for our dark work."

The visages of all present lowered at this irreverent speech, save only that of Ruthven, who maintained his grim equanimity undisturbed and unchanged throughout the evening.

The chamber in which they were seated at table was a large irregular apartment, hung with tapestry, which had been put up on the occasion of the royal nuptials, representing scenes of hunting and heroism. The ceiling was gorgeously carved and gilded, in many circles, knobs, and compartments ; it was truly regally rich and grand ; but a spirit was in its aspect which moved the minds of all present to gloomy reminiscences, and obscure apprehensions of dangers that had no body but in fears.

While the servants were renewing the tapers, and bringing in the replenished flagons, the remarks of Morton were desultory, almost wild, and he seemed to speak as if he exercised no volition over his ideas. In this crisis Maitland could not

refrain from inquiring, with an acute accent, what had come over him that he talked so without purpose.

"Bide a wee, Lethy," replied the Earl, "I'll let you ken by and by. It's no for naething the gledd whistles."

"Well, come out with it Morton," said the King, "or I shall go to bed;" and in saying these words he yawned with excessive lassitude as it seemed.

Morton, Ruthven, and Maitland exchanged serious looks at each other.

"I doubt," said Morton, "that if your Majesty is to rule Scotland as a King should, ye'll hae to want many a night's rest in camp and council before you can get a' thing your ain way."

This admonition, although lightly, even merrily spoken, was accompanied with a look that roused Darnley from his apathy, and he replied,

"It will be a long time I suspect, Morton, before you see me ruling in Scotland as a King should. Her Majesty needs no help in her government. She hath herself great talents, sufficient for the royal dignity; and for council has she not one worth us all?"

"And wha's he?" cried Morton.

"Rizzio," exclaimed Darnley, striking the table with vehemence.

"Rizzio!" echoed Ruthven from the hollow caverns of his voice, and starting up and laying his hand on the hilt of his sword, he added in his deepest tones, "We have endured him too long!"

All the other guests re-echoed his words, and the King, drawing his sword, theirs in the same instant flashed from their scabbards, and a stern silence for some time prevailed.

CHAPTER XLVII.

"Man preys on man, and from the wings of Time
O'er the wide world flings mischief."

CAUNTER.

WHEN the King's guests had resumed their seats, the Earl of Morton then opened the business for which they had been assembled.

"Please your Majesty, and my Lords and gentlemen," said he, "it's a manifest thing that we are a' tarred wi' ae stick. It canna be doubted that the pawkie upsetting deevil, Dauvit Ritchie or Rizzio—it's a name no musical in Scottish mouth—has been an agony to the best hearts o' Scotland; and really it says but little for the auld Scottish valour, that we submit in sic a hen-hearted mannner to his arrogance. Had sic a domineering Mischief been amang our ancestors, they would hae trod him like a black clok aneath their iron heels; but this small symptom that we have just seen o' rekindling courage amang us is a cordial to my spirit. Words, however, are but wind, unless we follow them up wi' deeds. Now, as naething can be mair certain than, one and a', not only o' us here, but o' every man o' a right mind in the country, that the Italian interloper ought to be put out o' the way, I dinna think that we could do better, while here enjoying ourselves sae couthily in his Majesty's joyous presence, than to think o' some way o' seeing it weel done."

Ruthven replied, "I most heartily join with Morton in thinking we have borne quite enough from the pride and insolence of Rizzio. We have sullied our honour by our pusillanimity. I am ready with hand and sword when his Majesty is pleased to command my service in this necessary work."

Maitland of Lethington, with his usual plausibility, here remarked, "I agree with my Lord Ruthven, that we have suffered to the extremity of patience; but until his Majesty sanction the undertaking, it would be to make an enterprise of necessity look like a crime, were we privately, and of our own accord to proceed farther. What is your Majesty pleased to think of this proposal to put Rizzio to death."

"Is it so determined?" said Darnley, with a husky voice, and a colourless countenance.

"We have no option," resumed Maitland; "to seek his banishment would make the Queen the more obstinate in defending him. We beseech your Majesty deeply to consider whether it consisteth with honour and your high station, that he should dwell in such familiarity with her Majesty?"

"Ye speak words o' wisdom, Lethy," said Morton, "and if his Majesty were a simple man, and her Majesty a burgher's wife, we ken that though a sword werena in the house, that the tongs frae the chumley-lug would do as weel to vindicate his conjugal authority. 'Deed! your Majesty is driven up into a corner, and folk will say, if ye let Dauvit live and thrive, ye're both coronated and cornuted."

Darnley writhed at the ignominy of the sarcasm, and before he could demand more becoming language from Morton, Ruthven interposed and said,

"We are spending our just wrath in weak words. Does your Majesty sanction our proposed undertaking to rescue the Queen from her derogatory thralldom, and to revenge the wrongs we have suffered from his pampered insolence? Here are men around your Majesty, ready to execute the justice which Rizzio has so insolently merited."

"In ae word, may it please your Majesty," said Morton, "are ye content to breathe, to creep like a downcast thing in the terror o' Dauvit's e'e, or hae ye courage to act wi' us, and to stand by us; for after what has passed this night, it's no consistent with prudence to ourselves to let this matter flutter in doubt. If your Majesty will be art and part in the business, we'll no be slack in the work, nor shall we afterward be wanting to get you the crown matrimonial, if no' something better. But supposing your Majesty should continue to float between wind and water, we must hae another sort o' handling. In short we would neither be honest men nor loyal subjects, if we didna warn your Majesty, that we're constrained, by strees o' circumstances, to be as plain as we're pleasant, and to let you know, that unless you sign this paper, ye may find frost in it. Lethy read the paction to the King, and read it distinct; for ye hae at times a burr that whiles gies your words twa meanings."

Maitland took from his breast a parchment, which he read, and which was to the effect, that whereas divers persons named therein had for the good of the realm and the honour of the Queen's Majesty, undertaken to slay and put out of the way David Rizzio, his Majesty not only approved of the same, but with free good will sanctioned the undertaking, and was conjunct thereunto.

When Maitland had read the compact, the other conspirators expressed their concurrence by heartily clapping their hands, and otherwise audibly declaring their readiness for the enterprise, which sounds and gestures so worked upon the spirit of the King, that, with an agitated bravery, he called for a pen and subscribed the bond of blood, to which all present successively affixed their signatures.

Morton and the other leaders in the combination, who had been wary in their wine, perceiving the danger of advancing farther into the business that night by the flushed and inflamed visages of their accessories, proposed an adjournment, and ap-

pointed the following evening for another meeting, to determine the time and place when their designs should be carried into effect. The fatal compact was entrusted to the keeping of Maitland, who, that no change in the King's mind might undo what had been done, immediately retired. He was soon after followed by the King; and the minor conspirators also went away, leaving only Morton and Ruthven together.

"My word!" said the Earl, when they were alone, "we hae made a brave stride to a gude end; but I hae my fears o' the King's firmness and fortitude. Did ye see how often he was wishy-washy, and how he had a hankering and hesitation to keep himself scaithless and out o' harm's way if he could? But he's nailed now. Really he's after a' but a saft lad, and I am nane surprised that the Queen, who has hersel' sae meikle smeddum, has discerned his deficiencies. However, though he's failed by them wi' her, we'll no cast out about them."

"I doubt," replied Ruthven, "the propriety of bringing that boy Douglas among us."

"Ah!" said Morton, "ye little ken Geordie. Howsever, it wasna for himsel' but for his step-brother's sake. Naebody will think that the Earl of Murray was na ane o' our marrows, when they hear that his step-brother, a laddie, was in the secret."

"I would rather," rejoined Ruthven, "that we worked with less craft; and I can see no good reason why all these gatherings and meetings should take place, as if our just purpose were a black stratagem of traitors against their King."

"Na, Ruthven," said Morton, "to speak the truth, I dinna discern meikle difference in the matter; but ye see we wouldna be able to keep the King true to us by a' the incitements we could employ, if we didna keep the upper hand by giving him a glimpse o' our connections."

"Well, it may be as you say, my Lord," rejoined Ruthven; "but plain ways are easy ways; and though I shall conform to whatever may be determined, I do not confide in so much mystery."

CHAPTER XLVIII.

" Thus the pale snow-drop on the frosted plain
Bows its fair crest beneath the wintry blast ;
The vernal shower shall fall henceforth in vain,
A fatal blight has nipped its roots at last,
And all its beauty shall be soon o'erpast ;
So Bertha drooped.

CAUNTER.

AFTER the departure of Darnley for Edinburgh, Adelaide, at the particular request of the Queen, left the residence of Lady Kilburnie, and took up her abode at the Palace.

Towards her the kindness of the Queen was undiminished. On the contrary, it might be said to have been studiously increased ; but there was something in it which Adelaide felt was a change ; nor was she mistaken.

The Queen was conscious that Adelaide was innocent of the alienation of Darnley's affection ; she could not, however, but regard her as the cause of the blight under which she was suffering. Still her natural generosity would not permit her to evince the feeling by which she was affected ; she fought against it, and endeavoured by studied and artificial attentions to compensate that falling off in her regard, which, in spite as it were of herself, made her almost dislike her favourite.

But as the preparations for the wedding were proceeding, and the celebration was only deferred till the arrival of Southennan's mother, Adelaide was content to endure without repining the formal attentions which the Queen substituted for her more gracious familiarity ; and Mary herself felt less of the constraint which her unhappy condition imposed, by considering that it was to be exercised only for a short period.

While the mutation in the Queen's manner was particularly experienced by Adelaide, it was observed by all her Majesty's attendants that a shade of melancholy was darkening upon her. Her spirits, naturally gay and buoyant, began to subside into a pensive soberness, and her temper, always quick, was becoming capricious ; few things appeared to interest her ; she seemed to seek seclusion, and often sequestered herself even

from Adelaide for hours together, ruminating with a slow and thoughtful step as she walked alone in the garden, or sat on the battlements of the Palace, contemplating the surrounding beautiful portion of her kingdom, which to her fancy smiled and frowned as the clouds drifted on the wind.

Sometimes she ordered her litter, and proposed excursions along the banks of the lake under the Palace ; but she seldom carried her intentions into effect. Her palfrey stood often ready for hours in the court-yard, but she rarely went abroad. It was manifest to all that her mind was unbalanced, and though the increasing paleness of her beauty could be accounted for by her maternal expectations, it was saddened with an expression which could never arise from a state wherein hope and anticipation were so intimately blended. All the symptoms of distaste and chagrin were distressingly visible in her looks, her actions, and in the sound of her voice. She was indeed a creature despondent and forlorn.

The religious controversies were quickening again throughout the kingdom ; the grants and distributions of the dissolved monasteries had not secured that degree of attachment and obedience from those who received them which had been expected, and many who thought themselves entitled to equal favours were moody with discontent, deeming themselves unjustly neglected. It would indeed be difficult in the history of mankind, to point out an individual whose situation had so many claims on human sympathy as that of the Queen of Scots at this time. Adorned with surpassing grace, in the bloom of youth, she was yet rejected by her husband, on whom she had showered with the lavish prodigality of youthful love the riches and royalty of her kingdom. Though to herself the scandal was unknown, the purity of her fame was sullied with base insinuations. Even her religion was regarded as prompting her to dissimulation and oppression. The hearts of her people were shrinking from her on all sides, and she felt as it were, by an increasing coldness, that she was daily left more and more alone.

Unable to withstand the keen sense of her increasing desolation she resolved to return to Holyrood, and to visit the old Countess of Morton in her journey. Accordingly, having directed the principal part of her suite to proceed to Edinburgh, she passed to Dalmahoy with Adelaide and a few attendants, among whom were Knockwhinnie and Southennan.

"I have come," said she to the venerable dowager, who was apprized of her approach, and met her at the gate, "to

entreat your kind maternal counsel, for my heart is heavy and my spirit sick. I will stay with you this night, and on the morrow perhaps you will come with me to Holyrood."

"Your Highness again does me great honour. What I can do, Madam, for your comfort and solace, duty requires; but, alas! my will hath lost its energy; for I am made helpless by the ligatures with which Age, by its infirmities, has bound my limbs and faculties. I am even more ineffectual than were I fettered with manacles of iron; for these might be taken off, but mine never can. I have all the will but can give no help; the consciousness of being feeble is strong upon me; I am like one who hath lost a limb, exposed to the pains that would have been felt in it had it remained, but uncompensated by any feeling of power even in illusion."

When she had conducted the Queen to the bower chamber, which she had so recently occupied, Mary entreated her to forget her rank, and to let her pass that evening as one who had come with charitable solicitations.

"It may not be," replied the old lady. "These things which your Highness would avoid are part of the means which Providence hath ordained to mitigate the troubles that would otherwise be intolerable in high stations. Yet will I not altogether be disobedient. There shall be no banquet, nor any kind of revelry; but yet we shall not be without entertainment befitting the condition of your Majesty. There is in this house an aged crone, strangely possessed with a mystical persuasion that she can discern the seeds of events in futurity. She shall be called if your Highness so wills, and read some fond encouragement for your contentation, out of the book of fortune."

"Hath she indeed skill of that quality?" inquired the Queen, her eyes brightening with the febrile awe and dread of superstitious excitement.

"I give but little credence to those who dream they are possessed of such lore," replied the Countess; "but I have seen her make marvellous instances both of mirth and sadness: she hath fished out secrets from bosoms that were as calm and deep as the pools of the river."

"I should not like to hear my fortune told," said the Queen, "lest she should tell me of coming evils, and thereby cause me to suffer twice. The prophetic alarm is as ill to bear as the come-to-pass."

"She deals not always in the dismal."

"Yet I will not hear her," replied the Queen, thoughtfully;

"for I have in the persuasion of my spirit a fearful foretaste of some disastrous doom. It makes me averse to consult the oracles of auguries and omens."

The Countess sighed, for her experience had taught her that in such bodement there was often truth; and therefore she pressed her suggestion no farther, but turned her discourse to things of more feminine import. Still what she had said infected the Queen's mind, and in addition to the sentiment of real sorrow, suggested apprehensions too vague to be described, yet sufficiently intelligible to increase her mind's disease: and, in consequence, yielding to their influence, she expressed her intention to remain alone until supper time. The Countess reverentially ventured to remonstrate against such indulgence of her melancholy.

"Melancholy feeds itself," said she. "It is like one sentenced with a loaf and pitcher to perish in a dungeon. When the bread and water fail, he breaks into his own veins for nourishment to the life which the act to preserve it destroys."

CHAPTER XLIX.

"I have a secret—but 'tis mine—
No word shall reach thine ear;
'Tis buried in my heart's own shrine,
And locked in safety there."

BOWRING.

DURING the time that the Queen remained alone, the Lady Morton, with Adelaide, Knockwhinnie, and Southennan, held a sorrowful communion on her unhappy situation. Various expedients were devised among them, by which they thought her afflictions might in some measure be mitigated: they were, however, but incompetent counsellors. The dowager alone seemed to have formed a right conception of what her Majesty's conduct towards the King should be: in her opinion a separation was the only alternative by which the thorns of her Majesty's pillow could be blunted.

While they were thus expressing their sympathy, old Elspeth came into the room, dressed as when she carried the train of her lady on the former occasion, and leaning on the ivory-headed staff already described.

"Wherefore," said the dowager, "hast thou, Elspeth, so apparelled thyself? Hast thou not heard that I have directed the household, by the command of her Highness, to make no change in the methods of the family. The Queen is indisposed, and cannot by reason thereof abide the performance of the homage due to her dignity."

The crouched and deformed old woman held up her right hand, with the forefinger only extended, and waved it three or four times in silence before her face.

"What wouldst thou, Elspeth?" said Knockwhinnie, on whom her mysterious gesture made the deepest impression. "What wouldst thou warn us of by so waving thy finger, and looking beyond us, as if thou hadst a sight of something invisible to other eyes?"

She made no immediate answer, but after looking at him, she began to chatter her teeth, and to utter a shrill disagreeable sound of laughter, mingled with screeching so harsh and hideous that it made Adelaide shudder.

"Cease Elspeth!" exclaimed the Countess. "Thou knowest I cannot abide the grating of thy discordant voice, when thou wouldst make mirth. What stirs thee at this time to be so moved?"

The crone, without any explanation, looked again at Knockwhinnie, and was a second time seemingly inclined to laugh at him, if that could be called laughter which was almost hideous. On this occasion the Countess also smiled, and said to Knockwhinnie that Elspeth foresaw he was likely to meet with some laughable mishap; but Elspeth said,

"No, I laugh to think how he will run if he can escape."

"Where—from what?" inquired Southennan, on whom the wizard wildness of the old woman's physiognomy was beginning to make some impression. She, however, took no notice of his question, but turning to Adelaide, regarded her for some time with a pleased and mild aspect.

"Good fortune, young lady," said the Countess, "assuredly awaits you. I have not seen so much brightness on Elspeth's countenance for many a day."

This loose conversation having continued for some time, the Dowager was on the point of requesting Elspeth to retire, when, without notice, the Queen came into the room, and surprised them by the alteration which in the course of the short interval had taken place in her appearance. Elspeth shrinkingly withdrew into a remote corner of the room, and placing her clasped hands on the ivory ball which crowned the top of

her staff, she rested her chin upon them, and peered from under her brows at the Queen for some time before she was observed. Mary herself was the first who noticed the searching inquest of her small, vivid, and suspicious eyes. At first, being harassed at the moment in her own mind, she evinced no disposition to notice Elspeth more particularly, but the Countess was displeased at what she considered the indecorous freedom of the old woman, and indicated by a frown and a significant shaking of the head, her displeasure ; she then moved her hand and pointed to the door. Elspeth, however, heeded not the admonition, but continued resting her chin upon her hands, grasping the ball, and seemingly insensible to the presence of every object but the Queen. In one respect it could not be said that any of the party was surprised at the solemnity with which she regarded the Queen, for their own reverence for Majesty accorded with the expression of that sentiment. The Queen herself, however, soon discovered that Elspeth was actuated by a deeper and more awful sentiment than deference to royalty, and the Countess, who also observed it, apprehensive that it might give rise to some ill-timed expression, somewhat more emphatically indicated her desire that she would leave the room, but without effect, for the old woman stood as it were entranced, until the Queen said,

"Is this the person, Lady Morton, to whom you alluded as a wonderful fortune-teller ? I wish for no proof of her skill. Come hither, nurse, and take this ring as thy fee. When I have time I will then listen to thee, but at present I have no mind for fantastical metaphysics."

Elspeth came crippling forwards, and accepted the ring, which she was on the point of placing on her finger, when she suddenly turned round and addressed herself, as if some person was visible near her.

"Ha !" she exclaimed, leaning on her staff, and with her left hand uplifted as in amazement, "What would you here ?"

"Whom dost thou speak to ?" cried the Queen with emotion ; "there is no one near thee, nor standing there."

"It is so," replied Elspeth, "I nevertheless saw him."

"I prithee, good nurse, not to fool me ; I have no fancy this night for such fables : go as I have said. Some other time I may be in the mood to listen, but to-night my thoughts obey far graver influences than maidenly curiosity."

Elspeth was on the point of moving away, when after having taken one step towards the door, she suddenly halted, and again eagerly and fearfully appeared to contemplate the Queen.

Mary, whose temperament was but slightly affected, on ordinary occasions, by pretensions to supernatural knowledge, nevertheless experienced a change on her spirit, arising from some cause inscrutable and darkling as the influence of the moon upon the sea, and with a tremulous voice she said to the dowager,

"Verily, she will constrain me to ask questions the answers to which I dread."

But before a reply could be given, Elspeth again looked steadily upon the vacancy, and repeated—

"What wouldst thou here?"

In all this scene with Elspeth there was a mystery and strangeness, resistless and wonderful; but the Queen, recovering her self-possession, resolved it should be ended, and with something more severe in her manner than she had ever before seemed capable of expressing, she desired Elspeth to retire, and to refrain from the practice of such mummery in her presence. The old woman turned suddenly with a glare upon her, and chattering her teeth, and uttering that hideous gabble with which she expressed both displeasure and enjoyment, then withdrew.

"That goblin thing," said the Queen, "hath made me more sensible of terror than aught of common humanity hath ever done before. She is malignant, and hath satisfaction in irritating the antipathy which her deformities excite. She is withal cunning, and doubtless has some purpose in practising these præternatural extravagances."

"Your Highness hath well discerned her peculiar craft. We have ever regarded her as somewhat deficient in the common faculties of our nature, but ever and anon she hath shown such glimpses of marvellous understanding, that she hath been for many years accounted among the household as one that hath the power of some unknown gift."

"She hath art," replied the Queen. "Can any one have set her on to this; for what hath chanced, that she should assume so much of the sybil?"

The Dowager appeared to be struck with the remark, and said,

"I am awed by the discernment of your Highness, and I beseech you to sift my son well as to this. She was his nurse, and ever since it was supposed that she was afflicted with the saddening perception of things uncome, he hath worked strange pranks by her agency. I am almost persuaded by what your Highness has discovered, that in these fits and trances she hath

been set on by him to make mirth, when the emptiness of the prognostications shall have been disclosed."

"If it hath been so," said the Queen indignantly, "it may not pass unblamed: doubtless it hath had relation to some dark design. Why these warnings, and admonitions, and prophecies? Verily, Madam, let him know that I have reason to think ill enough of the world, without the aid of miracles, to work me into suspicions of the intents of some about me."

In saying these words, the supper-bell being then ringing, she took hold of Adelaide by the arm and walked into the adjoining room, where the repast was set out.

CHAPTER L.

"Heart! then be cautious, nor attend
To whispering wiles nor slippery friend."

BOWRING.

ON the evening after the return of Knockwhinnie with Adelaide and Southennan to Edinburgh, the former was surprised by a message from the Earl of Morton, requesting to see him with all convenient expedition.

"I hae been greedy to see you," said the Earl, as Knockwhinnie entered his room. "Come away, and let us have a douce crack, and twa friendly words thegither; for na doubt ye have heard of the dule and trouble that's likely to come out o' that fule-affair anent your daughter and the King. Its noo thought to be a' owing to some stratagem of that wily deevil, Dauvit the Italian. Sit down, and tell me sincerely, as an auld friend, if it be true that he has been trying to cut out Southennan."

Knockwhinnie knew not well what to make of this, nor to what it tended; but he answered frankly, that he had never heard any thing of the kind.

"In truth, my Lord," said he, "Rizzio is no great favourite among us; and the attempt would have been fruitless had he ever made it."

"Weel, that's just my opinion," replied the Earl, "no man that has a right respect for himself would hae any thing to say to the crafty crotchet. He's unfathomable, Knock-

whinnie. An angel o' light is no able to wind through the labyrinth of his dark devices. It was an evil day that brought him among us. Don't you think so too?"

"Truly, my Lord, I take so little interest in the concerns of the Court, that I may safely say I scarcely know whether he is or is not justly blamed for pride and arrogance—the worst faults that I have yet heard imputed to him; except indeed that the Queen favours him with her confidence to the disparagement of elder counsellors."

"Nane of your jeers, Knockwhinnie; weel ye ken wi' me that would never be a fault! But if I didna ken you for a sedate considerate man, ne'er doing any thing in a hurry, I wouldna tell you what I'm half inclined to do."

"I'll pledge my honour, my Lord, that what you tell me will lie as dumb and quiet in my breast, as the dead in the grave, till you give me permission to set it free."

"That I dinna misdoubt, Knockwhinnie; but it surprises me to hear ye hae sic a warm side to that foreign loon. Really, if ye dinna draw aff frae him, and eschew him as if he were a yird tead, I'll no' say what may be the upshot; for it's true what I tell you, that he'll no' be lang permitted to rule wi' sic a rod o' iron our auld nobility, in the manner he has for a time past done."

"Although, my Lord, I cannot say that I think he is just a Joseph in Egypt, I am bound to acknowledge that he has always been very civil to me and mine."

"Weel, that's just like yoursol', Knockwhinnie; ye're a saft-hearted man o' the auld, and no' very hard in the head, or ye wouldna entertain sic an affection for Dauvit. Surely ye hae lost some o' your natural discernment, that ye're sae contented to thole the snool and snub o' the likes o' Dauvit Ritchie; tuts, I should say Rizzio."

"Excuse me, my Lord," replied Knockwhinnie, after a short pause; "what is the drift of all this you have been saying to me about Rizzio? It is plain, my Lord, you have a purpose; and without offence I may venture to say, after what you have been telling me, that you want my help. Now, my Lord, it is not necessary to go forwards in such a roundabout manner. I have few friends of an older standing; and I trust, that without much soliciting, your Lordship would get my help in any cause on this side of honesty."

"Thank ye, Knockwhinnie; thank you! What mair could I reasonably expect, seeing that ye're sae knit up wi' Dauvit!

But still I'm no' sure if what I would hae you to help me in is worth asking you to take the trouble o'."

"If it be any thing to serve you, my Lord, speak not of trouble, but account me ready, and abiding your call."

"Then," said the Earl, "I'll tell you; but be sure ye keep it secret. Ye hae heard what the King fears anent the confidentiality between her Majesty and Dauvit?"

I have," replied Knockwhinnie, dryly.

"Now it's thought that the shortest way of quenching his jealousy is to send Dauvit out o' the way."

"My Lord!" exclaimed Knockwhinnie.

"Hoot toot, hoot toot, man, but ye're bloody minded! I could wager a plaek to a bawbee that ye're thinking that Dauvit, puir childe! is to be slaughtered. Man, but ye hae black thoughts! Canna a vagabond o' a' lands be sent out o' this kingdom in a French ship frae the pier and shore o' Leith wi' a whole skin?"

"It is not impossible," replied Knockwhinnie, gravely; "but until I hear more of the intention, I can say nothing."

"Hech! but ye hae learned scrupulousity since I first kent ye. Hows'ever, it's but right what ye hae said, and I'll be candid. It's pactioned atween two or three o' us to catch Dauvit when he little thinks o't, and to carry him down, and put him on board the Burdax trader which is now in Leith roads, and to send him forth the kingdom, before the Queen kenis any thing about it. In short, Knockwhinnie," said the Earl, lowering his voice into solemnity, "the Queen's honour needs it for a prevention; and can you refuse to serve her?"

"To the extent of helping to send him out of the country, I have but little compunction; but if he make resistance, what then?"

"What then!" echoed Morton; "we'll tak the life o' him."

"I'll have nothing to do with it!" said Knockwhinnie, firmly.

"Oh!" said Morton, "ye needna make a midge a mountain. It's no' likely that he'll daur to resist; and a' that I want you and a few other friends to do, is to be in the way when the job's a-doing, to keep the Palace quiet; that the Queen and her ladies may not be cast into the vapours if a straemash should happen to arise."

"My Lord Morton, I devoutly wish," replied Knockwhinnie "that you had not broken this matter to me; for although may be done without guilt, yet it cannot be done without

offending the Queen; and for her kindness to my daughter, to say nothing of what duty and loyalty require, I am deeply her debtor."

The Earl made no immediate answer, but rose and took two or three turns across the room, and then said, with a stern and knotted brow,

"I am mista'en in you, Knockwhinnie, and I have told you too much; but ye'll either take a part in our stratagem, or I'll find a way to cut short this new prudence. Do you understand me?"

"Perfectly, my Lord."

"And what, then, is your decision?"

"To abide as I am."

"That'll no' be allowed, Knockwhinnie; think o' what you're about."

Knockwhinnie appeared a little agitated at the menace, which, more by his scowl than his words, Morton expressed; but he said firmly,

"You have heard my decision, my Lord; and if the business for which you sent for me be finished, I shall bid your Lordship good night."

The Earl was disturbed at the unexpected firmness and resolution with which his proposal was rejected, and appeared in manifest perplexity. At last he said,

"Then you'll no' even assist to keep the house quiet?"

"Perhaps," replied Knockwhinnie, "I might be consenting to that; but altogether it is a business I would fain shun."

"Ye're o'er far," said the Earl, "in the secrets o' our purpose to let you aff; and ye must undertake to bear a part in the ploy, or I must consult my marrows."

"My Lord," replied Knockwhinnie, "if I am to be driven, I must consult my friends, too."

Morton again took a turn round the room, and, clapping his hands thrice, three of his stoutest servants entered the room. Knockwhinnie stood aghast, and looked fiercely at the Earl; but there was no farther interchange of speech between them, for the Earl hastily quitted the room.

CHAPTER LI.

"Coming events cast their shadows before."

CAMPBELL.

SOUTHENNAN, during the time that Knockwhinnie was with Morton, had walked to the Unicorn to see some of his general acquaintance there, expecting to find Rizzio among them, and to learn something from him as to the temper of the King towards himself; but on reaching the tavern, he found it deserted, the guests were scattered abroad, and Balwham the host said that Rizzio had not been in the house since his return from Linlithgow.

"I marvel," said Balwham, "what has come o'er him. Ye had awfu' doings there, and folk say that he's an altered man sin syne. Proud he was before, and as upsetting as a game cock, but he wasna without a pleasant jocosity to humble folk, like me. I'm sure, if scaith has befa'n him, he hasna a friend that'll be mair concerned than mysel'. But something to a certy has come o'er him, for they say he gangs like a ghaist at uncanny hours in the King's Park. I'm wae for him!"

This information did not surprise Southennan, who had himself noticed the change which was thus become so public; but it made him more anxious to see Rizzio, while he forgot that his errand related only to his own affairs. Accordingly he went towards Holyrood, and in approaching the portal he saw by the bright moonlight Rizzio coming out alone, and passing on towards the King's Park.

Although the night air was cold, Southennan followed him, and with an increased pace. Rizzio at the same moment also hastened on. Southennan hesitated, thinking that he had observed him coming and wished to avoid him; but at the same moment Rizzio also halted. This encouraged Southennan again to mend his pace, and he was rather offended to perceive that the Italian again stepped out. He increased his pace, and Rizzio did the same.

"This is strange!" said Southennan to himself and halted a third time.

Rizzio had now nearly reached the corner of the garden-wall, not more than twenty paces distant and a-head of Southennan, where he also stopped. Southennan in some degree of cha-

grin, called him by name, and moved forward, but he received no answer. Rizzio in the same moment turned the corner and disappeared. Southennan, however, still pursued him, but on arriving at the corner of the wall, though the moon shone clear, and all within the range of the Park was as visible as at noon, the Italian was not seen there. Southennan looked for some time around, and an inexplicable awe fell upon him; he then returned towards the Palace. He had not, however, proceeded many steps, when he again discovered Rizzio walking in the shadow of the wall. This unexpected circumstance at once increased the dread which he felt, and prompted him to rush forward, but when he was again within a short distance of the figure before him, it disappeared.

"Is it his wraith!" exclaimed Southennan, in the low hollow voice of fear. "It can be nothing else," and he stood as it were spell-bound on the spot, throbbing with a dread, which, without any sentiment of pusillanimity, was profounder than the horror of ensnared cowardice.

His emotion did not last long; he walked towards the Palace, expecting to see the apparition a third time, but he was disappointed.

The state of his feelings was such that he did not proceed to Rizzio's apartment, as he had originally intended; but went pensively homeward. Scarcely had he ascended half way up the Canongate, when his spirits having rallied, he condemned himself for yielding to what he began to think could only be an illusion of his own mind, and suddenly turning round, resolved to satisfy his curiosity by seeing Rizzio. Accordingly he went back to the Palace, and was presently at the door of his apartment. He knocked, but was not admitted; hearing, however, by a rustle that some one was within, he knocked again. Rizzio himself then came to the door, holding in his hand a candle, which by the long unsnuffed wick, appeared to have been neglected.

"Come in," said the Italian; "I am glad to see a human face; for I have been asleep, and had such dreams that I dare not, from the horror with which they still affect me, venture to recollect them."

Southennan's superstitious dread returned upon him, and he sat down unbidden, and said, with a dry and husky throat,

"Of what did you dream?"

"Of nothing describable: a horror, a sound, a shadow;—omens and prodigious things, like the spectral vapour of a witch's cauldron, wherein forms and effigies gleam and flit and speak, while the shape and nature of them is shrouded in pal-

pable obscurity. I am shaken, I know not wherefore, nor by what; but I feel myself touched in the spirit with a coldness as intense as death. Ha! can it be the third omen?"

"What omen? of what do you speak?"

Rizzio then recounted to him the prediction of Chatelard on the evening before execution, and the still more appalling prophecy of the oracular Elspeth. Southennan's blood was frozen with the tale; but he had sufficient command of himself not to divulge the sight that he had seen in the Park. He only remarked, with affected indifference, while he shuddered at venturing to equivocate on such a subject, that it was thought to argue but little knowledge of philosophy to account dreams of more import than the trackless metaphors which pass through the mind in our waking hours, like ships on the sea, or birds in the air, or the fantastic wrack which resolves itself into thin air and perishes from the sight, even while it is contemplated. Rizzio himself assented seemingly to that opinion, as he said,

"I am sensible that the formless horror still stands beside me, and I cannot drive it away."

While they were thus speaking, Hughoc came in search of his master, with a request from Knockwhinnie that he would come to him without delay. In delivering his message something bewildered and fearful appeared in the looks of the lad, such as he had often worn in the romance and novelty of his first visit to Edinburgh, but which his master had not observed for a long time. Without many words, as the summons was urgent, Southennan bade Rizzio good night, and followed Hughoc.

"Oh, sir!" cried the lad, in a tone of extreme terror; "I wasna sent by Knockwhinnie; I come o' my ain thought, and I hope ye'll forgie the lee."—

"What has happened?" cried his master.

"Na, I'll just, sir, tell you the truth in a plain way, if ye'll hae patience. Ye see, being late and having gotten my supper, I was daunerin wi' Johnnie Gaff and one o' Lethington's flunkies to get a chapin in Lucky Bicker's public, when ganging through a dark closs, a dismal wynd, and lang entry, I heard a voice in a struggle up a turnpike stair; sae I mounted to see what it was, and by a blink o' the moon in at the window, I heheld four ruffian fallows oxtoring a man that was geggit;—and wha was he but Knockwhinnie! They opened a door wi' a key, and carried him in; which sae frightened me, for it was a dungeon-like dwelling, that I came running in quest o' you. 'Od, sir, we're again in the net o' perplexities!"

This intelligence amazed Southennan, and he walked with Hughoc eagerly to the spot, on arriving at which he found that the staircase belonged to the Earl of Morton's lodging, a tall house which overlooked the Cowgate, and had three or four stories under the level of the High-Street. Unable to divine what could have happened to cause Knockwhinnie to be so treated, he went, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, at once to the Earl's door, to demand an explanation; for he could not doubt that the outrage was some machination of his. But the door was cautiously opened, by an aged female with a small iron lamp in her hand, who, to his question, replied that the Earl was at supper with the King at the Palace, and would not be back until far in the night; perhaps not until morning.

CHAPTER LII.

"For Jupiter the lustrous lordeth now,
And the dark work complete of preparation
He draws by force into the realm of light."

COLERIDGE.

SOUTHENNAN quitted the door of the Earl of Morton's lodgings in great perplexity. He felt that something should be done to release Knockwhinie from his incarceration; but in the midst of his reflections, the fearful idea of having seen the wraith of Rizzio swallowed up every other anxiety, so absorbing are the dismal feelings associated with preternatural things.

His mind was in a state of awful oscillation, swinging as it were between human dangers and metaphysical mysteries; he could not control the confusion into which apprehension hurried his thoughts, and he was agitated both with reasonable and inexplicable fears, as if shaken with the ecstasies of a crisis. The paroxysm, however, was too violent to last long, and the perils with which Adelaide was surrounded soon absorbed all other considerations. He could discern no other effectual mode of protecting her, but by completing their marriage without delay, and conveying her to England or to France. Accordingly, he resolved not to wait the arrival of his mother, to have the ceremony performed in the course of the next day, and to proceed immediately after to the west country with his bride.

Upon this resolution another question supervened—what

was to be done for her father? The manner in which he had been treated, showed, that his life was not sought, but for what offence had he deserved such ignominious treatment, and beneath the roof of Morton too, whom he had been accustomed to regard as one of Knockwhinnie's oldest and truest friends? It was an occurrence which puzzled his comprehension; the more he thought on it, the deeper obscurity seemed to involve it; till at last, unable to come to any satisfactory conclusion, he determined, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, to return to the Palace and acquaint Adelaide with the situation of her father, and to advise her to report the affair at once to the Queen.

He reached the Palace before her Majesty had retired for the night, and obtained a hasty interview with Adelaide; who, greatly disturbed by his information, went directly to the Queen. Her Majesty was scarcely less troubled, but with her superior decision of character, she met the intelligence with more resolute equanimity.

Knowing that Morton, with several other Lords who were accounted the particular associates of Darnley, were then at supper in the Palace, she sent a peremptory request for the Earl to come to her immediately. A command so sudden and decided struck the company with one common feeling of amazement, and Morton at once obeyed the summons.

On entering into the Queen's presence, he found only her Majesty and Adelaide; and the latter in such a state of dejection that his conscience at once told him that she must have heard something of the outrage committed on her father. Nor was he allowed to remain long in doubt on the subject.

"My Lord Morton," said the Queen with an energy that was almost impassioned, "this lady is suffering much distress on her father's account, who is imprisoned in your house; why is it that you have ventured to treat him so? Set him at liberty without delay."

Morton could not conceal his consternation; his colour changed; his agitation became visible; and when he attempted to speak, his lips quivered, and his speech faltered.

"No words, my Lord, but let it be done instantly!" cried the Queen becoming more animated.

Morton at last mustered presence of mind enough to reply, "It wouldna be ill to comply wi' your commands, if the ploy were as your Majesty has been deceived to think."

The Queen perceiving that he was evading her command, said angrily, "My Lord, Knockwhinnie is imprisoned in your

house. Let him be rendered to me within the hour. I wait till it is done."

The Earl bowed without speaking, and was about to retire.

"Stop!" said the Queen. "You shall not quit this apartment. Send your orders by Southennan: he is in the Palace, and you cannot have a fitter messenger."

This injunction doubled the confusion of Morton. He could not expect that Southennan would see Knockwhinnie without becoming acquainted with what had passed between them, and an exposure of the whole plot seemed inevitable. This consideration, and the lofty determination of the Queen, completely mastered him. He was unable to reply to her reiteration that Southennan should be sent to bring Knockwhinnie, and his agitation became so overwhelming that he was ready to sink into the earth; when just in this vortex and whirlpool of agitation, Darnley precipitately came into the room, and roughly inquired why it was that his guests had been disturbed, and Morton so abruptly withdrawn from the table.

The appearance of Darnley, his eyes flashing, and his visage inflamed, was offensive and menacing; but the Queen, in answer to his impetuosity, replied, with contemptuous coolness,

"When your Majesty has received authority to be so categorical, you shall then be answered."

Darnley gave a vehement stamp, that shook the room, and abandoned himself to the wildest unbridled rage. She however, paid no attention to his violence, but, turning to Morton, repeated her command. The Earl, in some measure emboldened by the presence of the King, seemed at first disposed to forego the courtesy with which he always had hitherto regarded her, and answered with unbecoming brevity. But she at once rebuked and silenced him, by calling aloud to the attendants in the ante-chamber to order in the guards.

Both Darnley and Morton stood aghast; they looked at one another: even Adelaide trembled; for the Queen's indignation, roused to its height, appeared fraught with some extraordinary issue. The crafty genius of Morton, however, though cowed, was not subdued: he rallied his self-possession, and, with well-feigned jocularly, broke out into loud laughter, entreated her Majesty's pardon, and with his best humour and eccentricity, boldly ventured to make light of her anger. But she was not in a mood to be turned by such an artifice; she saw through it; and the guards who had been summoned, coming into the ante-chamber, she directed

a party of them to remain for her protection. Such promptitude far exceeded every idea that either the King or the Earl had formed of her spirit and resolution ; but the former made an attempt to regain the mastery, by ordering the guards to retire.

"Hold !" exclaimed the Queen ; "I command here !"

By this time, the bustle of calling the guards had roused the Palace ; and the King's guests, as well as the officers and servants of the household, filled the ante-chamber and the adjacent rooms. Morton, perceiving that it was in vain to resist the storm, yielded.

"Wi' your Majesty's will," said he, "I'll immediately cause Knockwhinnie to be found ; but this squall should be first calmed, for it's no' befitting your royal dignity that there should be such hurricanes in the Palace."

The Queen had herself been taken by surprise at seeing the crowd gather so fast, and gladly acceded to the proposal ; the guards were ordered to withdraw.

CHAPTER LIII.

"My soul is troubled with an ancient sorrow,
Which grows again anew ; and gloomy themes,
Gathering afresh, o'ershadow me with dreams
Of a mysterious darkness on the morrow."

BOWRING.

WHEN Adelaide went to inform the Queen of the disaster which had happened to her father, Southennan quitted the Palace, and proceeded towards the Unicorn, there to ascertain, if he could, the origin of the quarrel between Knockwhinnie and the Earl of Morton ; directing Hughoc, at the same time, to go in quest of Johnnie Gaff, that the necessary means might be concerted for the deliverance of his master.

Johnnie was found with Rough Tam at Marion Bicker's fireside ; and both of them, on hearing of the new jeopardy into which Knockwhinnie had fallen, were so instigated by her tale, that they proposed to rescue him outright. Accordingly, having procured some two or three other worthies of equal valour, they proceeded to the Earl's lodgings. On reaching the door in the lower part of the house, into which the prisoner had been carried, they tapped softly, and stood in silence. A

voice within, before opening, enquired who was there, and Rough Tam answered.

His voice being known to the person within, the door was opened. The liberators rushed forwards, and Knockwhinnie was soon at liberty. He accompanied Hughoc to the Unicorn, where Southennan was waiting, not anticipating the success of such a prompt enterprise.

Southennan and Knockwhinnie then proceeded towards the Palace, which they reached in the midst of the confusion described in the last chapter. In the course of their walk thither, Knockwhinnie partly described what had passed between him and Morton; but the obligation of his promise restrained him from speaking of the combination for the expulsion of Rizzio. They both, however, agreed that Knockwhinnie was not safe in remaining in Edinburgh, until the hostility of Morton could be appeased. To Southennan the hazard did not appear so imminent; but Knockwhinnie was fully aware how much the possession of the secret exposed him to the animosity of the Earl and all his accomplices; and therefore, on reaching the Palace, it was agreed that Knockwhinnie should proceed to Leith, and conceal himself there till the following evening, while Southennan went in to acquaint Adelaide with what had happened.

Rizzio, in the mean time, having been informed of the scene which had taken place between her Majesty and Morton, was greatly troubled. The imprisonment of Knockwhinnie was to him an inconceivable mystery: no circumstances within his knowledge could explain it; and yet he was unaccountably persuaded that it was somehow interwoven with his own fortunes; for his feelings were at this time like those of a sentenced man, and he ruminated with the grudge of the oppressed, that he should be placed, without the sense of fault, in a situation where ruin in its darkest forms impended over him. He knew that the growing power of the Protestants was fast making head against the Catholic party, and from that source alone he was convinced some direful catastrophe would probably soon overtake him; and this presentiment, or more properly, conviction, when he retired to his chamber for the night, threw him into a state of heaviness in which apathy more than serenity prevailed. At last he fell asleep, but it was a fitful unrefreshing drowse, often scared by ill-omened dreams. Towards the morning, by some gentle influence of the cool air he fell into a profound and salutary slumber, in which the pleasing echoes and reflections of early joyous youth made him

almost feel, when he awoke, as if the hilarity of boyhood had been renewed. He wondered at his own light-heartedness, and tried to persuade himself that the fears and cares which had for so many days hung upon his spirit were only phantasma, the vapours of some indisposition, and formed of such stuff as dreams are made of. It thus happened, when at the accustomed hour he went to receive his daily instructions from the Queen, that he wore a happier countenance than usual ; a circumstance which she noticed, and inquired what good fortune had chanced to him, alluding slightly at the same time to the disasters by which she was herself afflicted, adding,

"But come in the evening, when I may be better able to confer with you, for my poor head hath been much shaken by the disturbance of last night. I shall pass the day in private, for truly I am not well, and would be spared till supper-time, when you will bring your missives, and expound to me their import."

Rizzio felt, that to be thus invited to such privacy and confidence by her Majesty, was the greatest honour she had yet conferred upon him, and he left her with a buoyant elation of heart that seemed to lift him above himself, and to give him the assurance of undecaying prosperity.

Far different was the impression which the knowledge of this invitation produced in the Palace, where it was generally known that the Queen had, during the turbulent scene with Lord Morton, expressed, as it was reported, the most indignant aversion at the conduct of Darnley.

All day the King held himself in seclusion ; to Morton and Ruthven only was he accessible ; while Southennan and Adelaide were preparing for their marriage, which, from the entangled state both of Knockwhinnie's affairs and his own, it was determined should be celebrated that night privately in the Palace-chapel. His own concerns in consequence, though few and simple, still so engaged his attention that he had no leisure to observe any particular preparations afoot about the Palace ; but towards the evening he observed several retainers, in the livery of Morton and Ruthven, lingering in the King's Park, a circumstance which, without particularly interesting him, was yet so remarkable as to attract his attention.

Information of the hour appointed for the secret celebration of the marriage, [it was the Queen's supper hour,] having been conveyed to Knockwhinnie in his concealment, he also noticed, in coming to be present, the groups of armed men, but was at no loss to divine the cause which brought them to-

gether ; still however, believing that no serious harm was meant to Rizzio, beyond removing him from the kingdom, he deemed it wisest in him, considering his own interesting circumstances at that time, to take no part in the business, but to leave the Italian to his fate. Accordingly, acting on this determination, though dissatisfied with himself for being so indifferent, he went straight to the chapel to await there the coming of the bride and bridegroom. As they were both Catholics the Queen's confessor had agreed to unite them.

He had not been long in the chapel, which he found open and empty, when the confessor came in, followed by two priests with tapers, and two boys carrying censers. They lingered near the western door, and he stood with his back leaning against the railing of the altar musing on the various chances which had befallen him, and soothed by the solemn aspect of the place and the ponderous vaulted roof looking tranquillity.

CHAPTER LIV.

" The developement
Of this affair approaches."

THE Queen had intended to honour the nuptials with her presence, but her feelings on that evening were not in unison with an occasion so joyous ; and in consequence, after having taken leave of Adelaide, she retired to her dressing-room, and directed the Countess of Argyle, with two of her other ladies, and Rizzio, to attend her at supper.

At the appointed hour, Southennan and Adelaide, with the Lady Mary Livingstone as her bridesmaid, without other attendants, went to the Chapel. In passing along the passage in the interior of the Palace, which led to it, Southennan observed with awe a number of armed men, together with George Douglas and several of the King's associates, standing in the court of the Palace, and he naturally wondered on what intent they could be there assembled ; for Knockwhinnie, interdicted by his promise to Morton, had not divulged the conspiracy even as we have said to Southennan, under that impression of false honour which in those days regarded a vow or promise as equally obligatory, whether it related to good or evil.

On entering the chapel, a small procession was formed, in the van of which the two boys walked towards the altar, swing-

ing their censers. The confessor and the two priests followed, chanting an anthem, accompanied by the organ; and the bride and bridegroom followed. Knockwhinnie and the Lady Mary Livingstone came in the rear.

When they had reached the railing in front of the altar, the organ and the singing ceased; at which, by some unaccountable sympathy, the whole party started, and gazed at one another. Presently a strange noise was heard without, and a rustling and clank of arms.

At that moment the conspirators were assembling at the garden door which opened to the private stairs leading to the room where the Queen and her guests were sitting at supper.

The pause in the solemnity was but momentary; the confessor stepped within the railing and commenced the rites. He had not, however, proceeded far, when a strong blast of wind shook the whole chapel, drove in one of the windows behind the altar, and extinguished many of the lights; causing the escutcheons of the dead and the banners of the Knights of the Thistle to shake and flutter as if some preternatural influence were upon them. This accident appalled the confessor. He considered it a portentous omen to the bride and bridegroom: even the jocund spirit of the Lady Mary Livingstone was smitten with awe, and she clung trembling and alarmed to Knockwhinnie. The bride also trembled, and grasped the arm of Southennan, who alone was self-collected, and bade the confessor go on. Scarcely, however, was the ceremony resumed, when the sound of men in armour was again heard distinctly rattling on the outside of the Chapel, and by the broken window behind the altar, voices of whispering in low, earnest, and stifled accents, were distinctly heard. This, however, excited no particular attention, and the confessor proceeded.

As he repeated the second sentence of the prayer, a wild shriek arose without, and the pattering of many hurrying feet within the passage by which the chapel communicated with the Palace indicated some confusion there; Knockwhinnie evidently listened in dread.

"Go on!" cried Southennan with an eager and alarmed voice, to the confessor; and Knockwhinnie grasped the rails of the altar, with convulsive fortitude. The noise without increased. It was a deep, troubled, and suppressed sound, a smothered tumult, but it did not again interrupt the ceremony.

When the confessor was about to pronounce the benediction, a dreadful cry from within the Palace echoed through

the aisles and vaults of the chapel, and a rushing confusion and the clashing of arms roused anxiety into terror.

"Finish, finish!" exclaimed Southennan, unable to control his emotion. Knockwhinnie stood listening, as if all ear, heedless of the solemn rites in which he had so profound an interest.

The noise was now so audible that the voices of those on the outside who were engaged in the tumult could be recognised, although muffled as it were with a hoarse vehemence. The confessor abruptly and with an agitated voice pronounced the benediction; at the conclusion of which, George Douglas was heard exclaiming, on the outside,

"Be silent! It is done. He is dead!"

And presently, as it were in sympathy, the great bell of the Abbey began to toll; a fearful trumpet shattered the air; and the sound of a multitude gathering, rose louder and louder. The dissonance of many tumultuous sounds soon, however, subsided; and instead of bustle and altercation, a low solemn murmuring, the churm of dread and communion gradually succeeded and deepened around.

Such were the circumstances in which the nuptials of Southennan and Adelaide were concluded. The terrific tragedy of Rizzio's murder at the same time stained the Palace with indelible blood. It is unnecessary to describe his catastrophe, but History has not yet surpassed the crime.

When the crowd which the alarm collected around the Palace began to disperse, Southennan conducted his bride from the chapel, and Knockwhinnie led the trembling Lady Mary Livingstone back to her royal mistress, whose misfortunes from that era trode fatally fast upon the heels of each other; but it is no part of our task to describe them, nor to illustrate the mysteries which followed. Fiction, over the doom of Darnley and the fortunes of the Scottish Queen, acknowledges the superior wonders of Truth.

On the dismal morning after the death of Rizzio, Southennan, with his bride and her father, left Edinburgh for ever. They hastened to his residence in the West country, where after a few needful preparations, they embarked with his mother and household for England; and the home of his fathers gradually fell into decay. The memory of its original inhabitants faded in the recollection of the neighbourhood; and all that is preserved concerning their story is a vague tradition, that, being the last of Queen Mary's Papists, they went to France, after her dismal execution, and were heard of no more.

GLOSSARY.

A.

Ae, one.
Ahint, behind.
Ain, own.
Aince, once.
Almous, alms.
Aneath, beneath.
Art and Part, a Scotch law phrase, meaning an accessory.
Athweel, 'tis as well, or 'tis well.
Aught, or *aucht*, possession.
Aumry, cupboard.
Ay, always.
Ayont, beyond.

B.

Bailie, a magistrate, second in rank in a Scotch Royal Burgh, the same as an Alderman of London. Dr. Jamieson, on the authority of Blind Harry's Wallace, adds another definition—a mistress. It would seem that even in the days of Blind Harry bailies were slandered with being old wifish; we disclaim, however, having used the word in this sense in the text, and declare it is used in *melioribus sensu tantum*.
Bairn, child.
Bardy scoot, a pert girl.
Bawbee, halfpenny.
Bawb, beam of a house.
Beer mell, mallet for bruising bere or big.
Beglamour, to use a charm.
Belyoe, by-and-by.
Besom, broom.
Bicker, a wooden bowl for containing liquor. It is also now used for any sort of drinking utensils. It is evident the word *bickering*, meaning contention, strife, and actual fighting, sprung from the effects of the bicker.
Bide, wait.
Bide a wee, wait a short time.
Biggen, building.

Birkie, a lively young man.
Birsling his shins, warming his shins.
Blate, bashful.
Blethers, nonsense.
Blink o' favour, a gleam of favour.
Bodie, an oddish person.
Bodle, a copper coin, value the third part of an English penny.
Bolls, (pronounced *bows*), dry measures, such as firloths, pecks, lippies, stempints, &c.
Bonny, bonnie, beautiful, comely.
Book-lear, book-learning.
Bowet, a lantern.
Brae, hill.
Bowly-legs, crooked legs.
Braw, er, est, fine, er, est, handsome.
Brawley, very well.
Breeks, breechea.
Brigg, bridge.
Browst, brewing.
Broo, I hae nae, I have no good opinion.
Buckie, a refractory noisy person.
Buckie is a shell of spiral form, which, held to the ear, seems to have a continual sound within.
Buirldy, broad shouldered, athletic.
Bye, past.
But and ben, the outer and inner rooms of a house.

C.

Callant, a lad, a stripling.
Camstairie, froward, unmanageable.
Cankery, cross.
Canny, wary; *no canny*, means not safe, in a superstitious sense.
Cantie, cheerful.
Cap, a wooden bowl for holding liquor.
Cardinal, a long cloak, or mantle.
Carle, an old man.
Carlin, an old woman.
Casury, street.
Caution, security.
Chamer, chamber.

- Chap, chappie*, a smart fellow, and a little smart fellow.
Chap aff, chop off.
Chappil, knocked.
Chappin, a quart; and a *chappin stoup* is a quart pot.
Chield, a fellow.
Childer, children.
Clavering, gossiping, idle talking.
Claes, clothes.
Clash o' mire, handful of mud.
Clash, tittle tattle, the nine days wonder of a village.
Cleck, to hatch.
Cliskmaclaver, idle discourse, silly talk.
Clootie, Nick the Devil.
Closs, a passage, or entry between two houses.
Cockernonie, a twisted knot of hair worn by females.
Coffer kist, chest or trunk, a strong box.
Coft, bought, purchased.
Cooke, a sly look, or peep.
Cools, ancies.
Cosey, snug, warm.
Court to, to woo.
Couthy, affable, familiar, affectionate.
Cow, intimidate.
Cow a', beats all. *Cow's a'*, cuts out all, an expression of wonder.
Crack, chat, conversation.
Crappit heads, a particular mode of dressing haddocks with oatmeal.
Creel, a basket.
Crockit, lame.
Croozie, lamp.
- D.
- Daft*, foolish, wanton, gay.
Dauner, wander.
Daunter, daunter.
Daur, dare.
Deevil, Deil, Old Nick, Nick the Devil, the polynom king of the lower regions. For description see Paradise Lost, by John Milton, and Satan, a poem, by Robert Montgomery.
Deevil's buckie, a perverse, or refractory person.
Deil-be-licket, nothing.
Deg, a blow with a sharp pointed instrument.
Demented, deranged, insane.
Derning, concealing, hiding.
Dieted, ate.
Dight, wipe.
Disjasket, dejectedly, dishevelled.
Dochter, daughter.
- Dodge*, to jog, to follow, to watch any one.
Doited, stupid.
Dominie, a pedagogue.
Doo, a pigeon.
Douce, sedate, gentle, mild.
Dour, dure, obstinate, stern, severe.
Drap, drappie, drop, a small drop.
Dule, grief; to *thole the dule*, is to suffer the grief.
Dunkle, a hollow.
Dwamed, swooned.
- E.
- Ee, eye*,
 "And maun I still on Menie doat,
 And bear the scorn that's in her ee."
Eerie, superstitious timidity.
Eggit, instigated.
Eild, old, aged.
Elsin, awl.
Embro, Edinburgh; the Scotch generally pronounce it so.
Ends and awls, pack up your, an expression used for informing a person that his absence would be good company.
Eries, a piece of money given for confirming a bargain.
Exhaust, exhausted.
Eydant, diligent.
Eyne, eyes.
Ewie, ewe, a female sheep.
- F.
- Fairings*, present given at fairs.
Farrant, auld farrent, sagacious.
Fash, trouble.
Faurt; weel faurt is good-looking, and ill *faurt* the contrary.
Firlots, voce bolls.
Flaught, a flake.
Flechtering, fluttering.
Flunky, a man-servant.
Foray, military inroad.
Forefoughten, tired.
Foregather, to meet accidentally.
Forement, opposite.
Frae, from.
Fule, fool.
Furthy, frank, affable.
Fye gae rin and fye gae ride, make haste, run and ride.
- G.
- Gaberlunzie*, a beggar man.
Gaen, gone.
Gallard, a gay dissipated person.
Gang, go.
Gaun, going.

Gar, make.
Gardevine, a square bottle.
Gash, shrewd, sagacious.
Gently, neat, elegant.
Get out o' the gait, get out of the way.
Gie, gie't, give, give it.
Gin, if.
Girn, a gin, a snare also of any kind.
Girt, thick.
Glaiket, giddy, foolish.
Glamour, a charm which the Scotch suppose can be thrown on the eye, causing it to see objects differently from what they are.
Gleg, quick, keen, clever, expeditious.
Gley'd, squint-eyed, oblique in general use.
Glint, a flash.
Gloaming, twilight.
Glowring, staring.
Gowden, golden.
Grange, farm-buildings.
Greenin, longing-green and melancholy.
Greeting, crying.
Gruesome, frightful, grim.
Guisart, morrice-dancer.
Guising, masking.
Gumption, understanding.

H.

Ha', hall.
Haddie, a rizard, a dried haddock.
Hae, have.
Haena, have not.
Haffit, the side of the head.
Haggis, one of the six national dishes of Scotland.
Haggit aff, chopped off.
Hagglet, mangled.
Haimsucken, the technical name in Scotch law, for the crime of assaulting or beating a person in his own house; derived from *haim*, home, and *socken*, to seek, or pursue.
Handlings, doings.
Havers, foolish, or nonsensical talk.
Hech, the act of breathing hard, or panting; used as an expression of wonder.
Heft, handle of a knife or dagger.
Hempy, *hempie*, a rogue, a tricky wag, one to whom the adage might be applied, "the hemp's growing that will hang you."
Hern pan, scull.
Het, hot.
Hoast, cough.
Hobblieshaw, hubbub, tumult.
Honesty, *an*, a thing to do honour.

Horn, put to the horn, a Scotch law expression. A *horing* is a writ running in the King's name, on which a defendant is charged to make payment of his debt; failing payment, in ancient practice, a messenger at arms, an officer belonging to the herald court, went to the cross of Edinburgh, and having "winded his horn" thrice, declared the defendant a rebel for having disobeyed the King's order to pay the debt, and thereupon a writ of imprisonment was issued. A writ of imprisonment still proceeds upon this fiction, but the messengers do not now a days actually perform their sounding functions, they, however, return a certificate that they have done so.
Hout, tout, tut, tut.
Houf, haunt.

I. J.

Jalouse, suspect.
Jenny-wi'-the-mony-feet, centipede.—Extract from the speech of Lord P—t, in delivering his opinion on the case, *Cunningham v. Russel*, to be reported. *Fac. Coll.* vol. 1296, p. 345: "It should be observed, my Lords, that what is called a beetle is a reptile well known in this country. I have seen mony a ane o' them on Drumshierlin muir. It's a wee black beastie, about the size o' my thumb-nail. The country people ca' them *cloks*, and I believe they ca' them also *jenny-wi'-the-mony-feet*."
Jiffey, a moment.
Jim and genty, neat, slender, elegantly formed.
Ilk, each, every, the same.
Inkling, hint.
Intil, into.
Jooked, an evasive motion, deceitful acting, shrinked, to bend the body to evade a blow, tricked.
Ise, I shall, I am.
Isna, is not.
Just, a Scotch reason; because it is fit and reasonable.
K.
Kail, soup with vegetables in it.
Kain, small duty paid to a landlord in the shape of fowls, cheese, &c.
Keeking, peeping.
Keelevying, flirting.
Kep, stop, gather.
Ken, kent, know, known.
Kenawhat, know not what, a term of disrespect.

Killfuddoching, much ado about nothing.
Kill, a Highlandman's breeks, or rather petticoats.
Kimmer, female neighbour.
Kipper, kippered *saumon*, salmon cured with pepper and salt, and dried.
Kirk, church.
Kirk and mill, to say "Make a kirk and a mill of any thing" is an expression of contempt.
Kist, chest.
Kitchen, any thing eaten with bread.
Kith and kin, relations.
Kittle, ticklish, difficult.
Kyte, belly, stomach.
Kythe, show, manifest, produce.

L.

Laddie, lad.
Laird, a country gentleman, generally applied to those under the degree of knights.
Lang-nebbit, having a long nose; *lang-nebbit words*, means such as are learned and recondite.
Latherons, wanton ladies.
Lee, lie.
Leddy, lady, or rather gentlewoman.
Leg bail, running off instead of finding bail to answer an offence.
Leil, true, loyal, upright, honest.
Let wot, make known.
Lilt, a cheerful song.
Link and gallant, to walk arm-in-arm and beau the ladies.
Links o' Leith; links as here used means the sandy ground lying among the windings of the water of Leith, between that place and Edinburgh.
Lippy, voce *bolts*.
Lith, joint.
Lodovie, brandy.
Loof, palm of the hand.
Loon, cunning person.
Loup, to leap.
Lucky, a designation given to an elderly woman, and also to the mistress of an alehouse.
Lug, ear.

M.

Mail, rent in whatever way paid for a farm or house.
Mair, more.
Maist, most.
Marrow, an associate, one of a pair.
Maun, must.
Maunna, must not.
Megsty, an interjection.
Meikle, much.

Mell, to, to mix.
Menseless, a person without manners.
Merk, a Scotch silver coin of the value of 1s. 1½d. sterling.
Messenger at arms, voce *Horning*.
Mess John, Mass John, a familiar designation for a clergyman.
Messin, a dog, a cur.
Millinder, milliner.
Minimumest, smallest.
Mirk, dark.
Misleart, unmannerly, mischievous.
Morn, the, to-morrow.
Muckle, big, great.

N.

Na, no.
Nae, none.
Narrow, miserly.
Neb, nose, beak.
Needcessities, necessities.
Ne'er-do-weel, a never-do-well.
Neive, a clenched fist.
Neuk, nook.

O.

Outstraplous, obstreperous.
Owlet, an owl.

P.

Painchey, paunchy.
Palmy, a stroke, or blow on the palm of the hand.
Pannel, the name of a prisoner when placed at the bar.
Parten, a crab.
Pauckie, sly, artful, cunning, shrewd.
Peck, voce *bolts*.
Pendicle, attached; generally applied to a small piece of ground attached to a greater piece.
Peremptors, from peremptory.
Pingle, strive, toil eagerly and narrowly.
Place, the, the manor-house on an estate.
Plack, a small copper coin, value one-third of an English penny.
Plottie, a plot.
Pock neuk, the bottom corner of a bag.
Preec, taste.
Precognition, a law phrase, the first step in a criminal matter. The culprit and all the parties who know any thing of the offence, are examined, and this examination is used in framing the indictment.
Prejinct, precise.
Prent, print.
Provost, the Mayor of a Royal Burgh.

ks, frogs.
oor.

R.

rode, applied to the riding on back.
in inroad.
geous, riotous, violent.
a scold.
g, jovial.
ye, counsel ye.
ent, arrested.
ent, arrestment.
remedy.
g, or *ringen*, reigning.
to roll a drum, to applaud by and heel.
rough or hasty pull.
a staff, (*shillela*, Hiber.)

S.

ift.
ore.
same.
scratch.
r Scoug, to hide, to shelter,
a, protect, defend.
rr, singe, a species of polypus.
a table napkin, a towel.
r, a servant.
bane, the wrist, the bone that ckled.
s slice.
scissors.
ancles.
rrs, shoulders.
ated by blood.
sh.
silver, money in general.
sheriff.
a stroke or blow.
a, a shriek.
o' day, the dawn.
pan, a preparation of hot ale.
mall.
um, spirit, mettle, quickness of hension.
latch.
rawer, cunning; a person who slyly pull the latch.
orning, sturdy beggars, in ape of friends and dependants, quarter themselves *ad lib.*:
ag, in its most extended sense, ined in the Scotch law books e the taking of meat and drink ce without paying for it."
ief, in the Scotch law this theft attended with violence.
ask, inquire.
le, admissible as a surety.

Spring, a quick and cheerful tune on an instrument.

"Come, gie's a spring!" the lady cried."

Souther, solder.

Stalwart, stalworth, brave, stout, strong.

Staple, part of the fastening of a door.

Stey-brae, a steep hill.

Steading, a farm, houses belonging to a farm.

Steek, shut.

Stots, oxen.

Stoup, a pot or flagon.

Stour, dust.

Straemash, disturbance, broil.

Summer-and-winter, to, to dilly-dally.

Swankie, a young fellow, or an active and clever one, a blood.

Swatches, patterns, specimens.

Sybow, onion.

Syne, afterward, then, time past, late.

T.

Tae, toe.

Tappit-hen, a pint pot measure, literally a crested hen.

Tass, a cup.

"Come gie me a pint o' wine,
And fill it in a siller tassie."

Tellt, told.

Tether, halter.

Thae, these.

Thegither, together.

Thocht, thought.

Thole, to bear, suffer.

Thrang, throng, engaged.

Thrapple, throat.

Thraw the key, turn the key.

Tirl, to, to touch slightly, so as to produce a faint sound.

Tirl at the pin, turning the pin by which cottage doors were fastened.

Tocher, *tochered*, dowry, having a tocher.

Tod, *tod-lowry*, a fox.

Toom-handed, empty-handed.

Tot, all, whole.

Tousy, rough, shaggy, dishevelled, disordered.

Tousle, rough dalliance, rumple, and handle roughly.

Tow, a rope, a halter.

Trance, a passage within a house, and trance-door is the door to the passage.

Trow, to, to believe, to make believe in sport.

Turn, to do a, to perform a piece of work.

Twal, twelve.

U. V.

Vir'l or virle, a ring on the end or point of any thing to keep it firm.

Umquhile, sometime, formerly.

Uncanny, dangerous, not safe, applied also to a person supposed to possess preternatural powers.

Unco, unknown, strange, unusual, surprising, very.

W:

Wa', wall; and the expression, "when a man's back 's to the wa'."

Wae, wo.

Waling, choosing, selecting.

Wally-wally, expression of lamentation, from *wa*, woe, and *la*, oh!

"Wally-wally, up yon bank,
And wally-wally down yon burn."

Wan weel thro', got well on.

Waur, worse.

Waurt, spent.

Wee, little.

Weel, well.

Weel fraut, good-looking.

Weel I wot, well I know.

Wha, who.

Whar, where.

Whilk, which.

Whisht, or *Wheesht*, hush, be silent.

Whorl, the fly of a distaff, sometimes of wood, sometimes of stone.

Whudding, whisking, moving away quickly.

Wi', with.

Wily, cunning, enticing.

Winna', will not.

Winsome, gay, merry, comely, agreeable.

Wiseing, wheedling, enticing.

Worricow, a scarecrow, a bugbear.

Wraith, an apparition.

Wud, mad, insane.

Wuddy, the gallows tree.

Wull, will.

Wull-cat, wild-cat; and to tumble the wull-cat means to whirl heels over

head, or "heels o'er gowdy," a Somerset.

Wylticoat, an under petticoat.

Wynd, an alley or lane.

Wyte, blame.

Y.

Ye'll, you will.

Ye're, you are.

Yerl, Earl.

Yestreen, yesternight.

Yett, gate.

Yill, ale.

Yoner, yonder.

THE END.



1872

1873

1874

1875

1876

1877

1878

1879

1880

1881

1882

1883

1884

1885

1886

1887

1888

1889

1890

1891

1892

1893

1894

1895

1896

1897

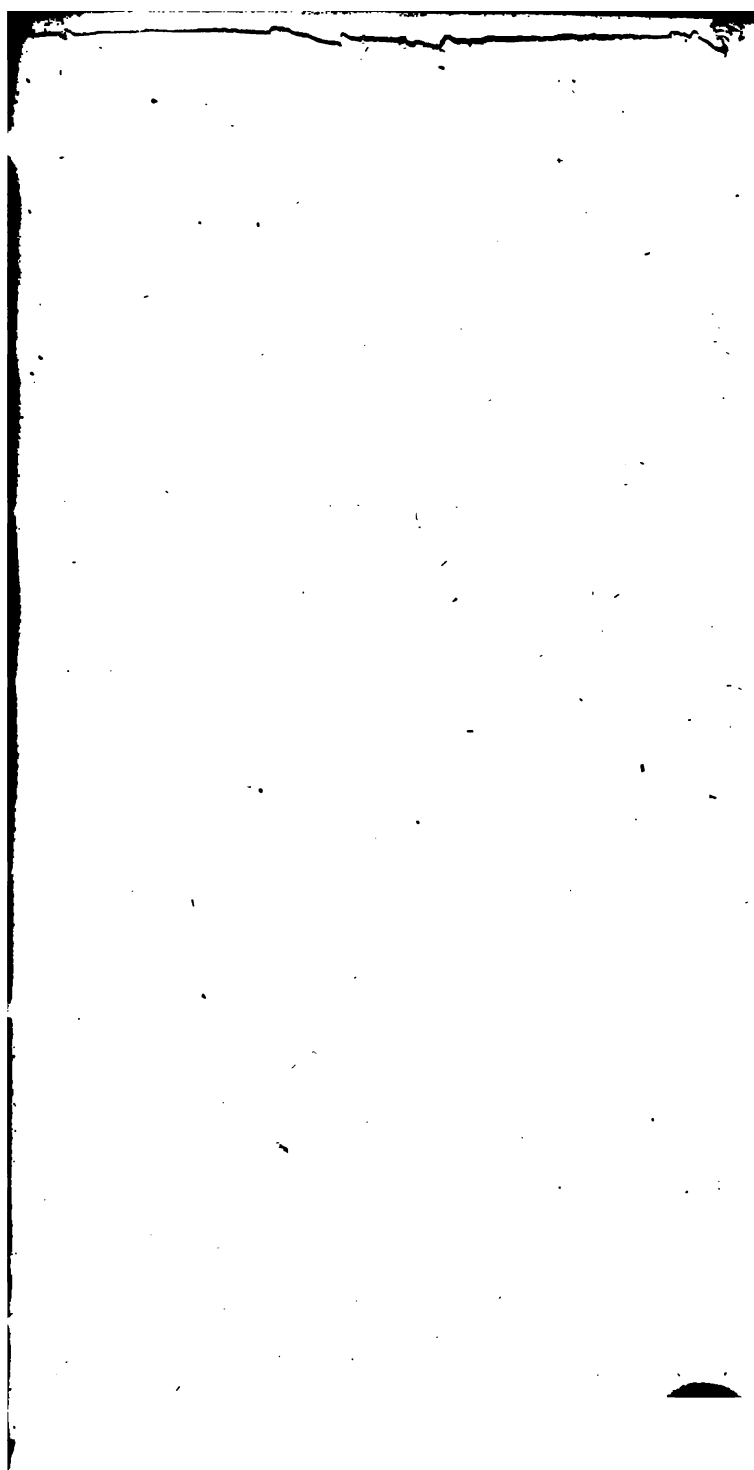
1898

1899

1900

1901

1902





3-

neu

‘

‘

FEB 7 - 1941

